



# THE Instructor

DECEMBER 1966 Volume 101, No. 12

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*“When Christ Was Born in Bethlehem”*

*(Our Cover)*

There were things of importance in Bethlehem of all nights was the simple fact that in Bethlehem the inn that had no room; Mary's urgent need and Joseph's disappointment that he could not provide suitable for her comfort and safety; the singing of angels in the sky; the bright star that pointed the way for the shepherds; and the star that pointed the way for the wise men on their journey to Bethlehem. But the greatest event on that most wonderful night was the birth of the Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Events, Answers to Your Questions, and

“Desert Sunday School Union of

“Desert Sunday School



*Painting by Carl Bloch.*

## Philosophy of Life Contained in Luke's Story of the Birth of Christ

by President David O. McKay

*We've never seen the Father here, but we have  
known the Son,  
The finest type of manhood since the world was  
first begun,  
And, summing up the works of God, I write with  
reverent pen,  
The greatest is the Son He sent to cheer the lives  
of men.*

*Through Him we learned the ways of God, and  
found the Father's love;  
The Son it was who won us back to Him who reigns  
above.  
The Lord did not come down Himself to prove to  
men His worth,  
He sought our worship through the Child He placed  
upon the earth.<sup>1</sup>*

*(Continued on following page.)*

(For all Christmas lessons; for Course 13, lesson of February 19, "What Jesus Is"; for Course 19, lesson of February 19, "Salvation"; for Course 27, lesson of February 12, "Man Is That He Might Have Joy"; to support family home evening lessons 45 and 46; and of general interest.)

<sup>1</sup>From "Thoughts of a Father," by Edgar A. Guest, *The Path to Home*; Reilly and Lee Company, Chicago, Illinois, 1919; page 153. Used by permission.

The story of the birth of that child in the old town of Bethlehem was written by a man who never met Jesus, but who studied His life and became one of His most ardent followers. He has told the story in the following words:

*And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.*

*And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.*

*And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.*

*For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.*

*And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.*

*And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,*

*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. (Luke 2:8-14.)*

On November 2, 1921, Brother Hugh J. Cannon and I rode in a Ford car from Jerusalem down to Bethlehem. As we were going down the road, we passed Rachel's grave. We had the driver stop long enough for us to read the inscription thereon. A little farther on, we saw a man leading a herd of sheep. Our driver honked the horn and the shepherd rushed off to the side of the road and the sheep followed him; and as we drove by, the sheep were standing around the shepherd who was giving them, I suppose, some kind of sweet—I do not know what it was. To me it was a good illustration of the scripture, ". . . And the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow" (John 10:4-5)—an example of the sheep following the shepherd.

Soon we neared an open field—it seemed to me to be off to the left of the town of Bethlehem, to which we were going. I should like to write a few incidents about that town.

#### **O Little Town of Bethlehem**

I have quoted from the scripture the sweetest story ever told. Though we may repeat it in less than two minutes, it contains the whole philosophy of life, the science of living.

The scene is Bethlehem, a city of Palestine, which, in point of historic interest, is second only to Jerusalem. It is the scene of many important events in Biblical history. Its first mention in the Bible is in connection with the death of Rachel, to whose tomb I referred, over seventeen hundred years before Christ was born. It was the home of Boaz

and Naomi, and there was consummated the beautiful story of Ruth. Eleven hundred years or thereabouts before the birth of Christ, we read of Bethlehem as the home of David's house; and it was at Bethlehem that the prophet found David tending his sheep and anointed the little shepherd boy to be the ruler of Judea and of Israel.

A little later we hear of the Philistine garrison in Bethlehem, David's home city, held by his enemies. How dear that town was to his heart, I think, is shown by the wish that he expressed for a drink of water from the well of Bethlehem. Many a time he had quenched his thirst at that old well. As he stood facing an enemy that held his birthplace, three of his soldiers, hearing their general's wish, broke through the ranks of the Philistines and got the water for their leader. It is a touching picture of the loyalty and devotion that David inspired in his followers.

#### **The Most Beautiful Story Ever Told**

In Micah, the fifth chapter, Bethlehem is mentioned by the prophet as the birthplace of the Messiah. I wonder if the shepherds, to whom the first revelation of Christ's birth was given, had not that prophecy in mind as they kept watch over their flock by night. A revelation of God does not come to man unless he prepares himself for it and lives worthy of it.

Evil influences will thrust themselves upon men, but God will be sought. Evil is always urging and tempting and promising. God asks us to put forth effort and seek—" . . . Seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." (Matthew 7:7.) But we must knock, we must seek; and I think those humble shepherds were treasuring in their hearts the hope, as all Judea was treasuring it, that the Messiah would soon come. At any rate, those humble men had opened to them the vision of God.

I have said that Luke's account of the birth of the Saviour is the most beautiful story ever told. I wish now to quote the paragraph that is not often associated with this story:

*And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. (Luke 2:15.)*

Note that the shepherds did not say, "I wonder if this is true." They did not say, "Let us go and see if this thing be true." They said, "Let us go and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us"—an assurance that God had revealed His Son, that the angels had given

to the world the message that He who should be King of Kings and Lord of Lords had come as a mere babe in the humblest little Judean town.

What would you give—you who may not have that assurance—to have in your hearts that same confidence that Christ is born, that Christ lives, that God had heralded His birth, yes, and His second coming, by the angels in heaven?

All doubt would be banished, all worry concerning our purpose here in life would cease. That is what such a testimony means. If we could only say: "Let us go now and see this thing which has come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us."

#### The Spirit of Christmas

The revelation that Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, is a divine personal being, is a wonderful thing. Is it not the most sublime in all the world? With it comes the assurance that this Christmas, which we are now celebrating, has a divine significance. What does it matter that it is not the season of His birth? It cannot be that. The story tells us that it is not. The shepherds in Palestine kept watch over their flocks from the month of April to autumn, so it was not in December. But what does that matter? It is the spirit of Christmas that counts; it is the feeling that we are His brethren, and that we want to live to come back into His presence so that we can go, as the shepherds went, right into the very presence of the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords. We do not want to live a life that will lead us away from the Christ.

Let us have the spirit of Christmas with the same assurance the shepherds had when they received the message of the angels, and with that spirit go to Him. Therein is life. Unless we can find God and Christ and know them, we shall not have eternal life, for ". . . this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." (*John 17:3*.)

I stated that this sweet story of the birth of the Saviour contains the philosophy of life; and to know God, to give Him glory, is one of the conditions of salvation and peace among the human family.

#### The Great Question

Peace is promised in this simple little story, but the great question is: How can we get that peace of which the angels sang, and which the shepherds found in that humble little limestone grotto with Jesus lying there in a manger? I have heard some men say: "We do not want peace." Not want peace? Why, it is the greatest blessing that can come to

man! Not lethargy, not inactivity, no, but peace; that peace which Christ had in mind when, after His resurrection, He appeared to His twelve disciples and said: "Peace be unto you." Such peace was never won by subterfuge nor argument. No peace is ever in store for any of us but that which we shall win by victory over shame and sin, victory over the sin that oppresses as well as over that which corrupts. "Nothing can bring you this peace," says Emerson, "but the triumph of principle."

The triumph of principle means also triumph over the six enemies to peace, which I name as avarice, lust, worldly ambition, envy, anger, and pride; the six things which the tempter offered in varying form to the Saviour on the Mount of Temptation.

Unrestrained passion, ungoverned appetite, envy, hatred, wealth, and power, used to govern men and to crush them—these are the enemies of peace. They bring misery to the individual. They bring unhappiness in the home. They bring war and contention in the world, discontent, misery, and death. They are the opposite of the peace which Christ came to give to the world. Why cannot men strive more earnestly than ever before to leave these out of their hearts, to overcome avarice, to give rather than to gain? This is life; this is true living!

#### The Answer

Only by the triumph of principles over evil can the world have that peace which Christ came to give to the world. No peace has ever been won or has ever been obtained by the cultivation of any of the six passions I have named. Why will the Christian world not understand this?

One cannot have peace by "getting" unless one uses what one gets for the happiness and the betterment of mankind. Only by serving our fellowmen can we obtain that peace which Christ came to establish on earth. His glory, His work, is to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.

I rejoice this Christmas season with my brethren and sisters that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (*John 3:16*.) And under that inspiration He established His Church that mankind might have peace through obedience to the Gospel. There is no other way. Men everywhere strive for peace, but as they attain it, they do so only to the extent that they apply the principles of the Gospel. The Gospel of Christ is the true philosophy of life; it is the science of living; and its essence was heralded by the angels two thousand years ago.

# DOES SINCERITY + GOOD MOTIVES = AUTHORITY?

by Monroe J. Paxman\*

Sincerity of intent and nobility of motive are often put forth as valid and sufficient prerequisites for assuming authority. Years ago a difficult case in court led me to weigh even these virtues with great care in attempting to direct the affairs of others.

## "I Have Authority—I Could Arrest You"

In eastern Utah a petition had been filed concerning a Ute Indian boy on a reservation, charging that the boy was without proper parental guidance, was missing school, and was spending considerable time away from home in the company of associates with bad morals. The case was routinely set for hearing, with notices being served on family members. When I arrived at the courtroom, the boy and several expressionless, bronze-skinned adult Indians were present, dressed in typical western clothing but featuring Ute Indian hair styles.

After the preliminaries of noting the identity of those present, advising them of their rights, and reading the petition, an unusual thing happened. A mature, leather-faced Indian woman arose and, after a dignified pause, spoke in firm, slowly-selected American words:

"This boy belong Ute Indians. His mother, my sister. If something wrong, Indian court should decide, not white man's court."

I replied that the court respected her right to note her objections to the court's taking jurisdiction

of the case involving her nephew, but that even though I interpreted her comments as a motion to dismiss the petition, I would have to deny the motion because the Utah statutes seemed to require the court to act in such cases, and appeared to apply to all residents of the state, Indians and non-Indians alike.

She became more insistent. Slowly she raised her arm and pointed her finger directly at me. "You

"I have authority . . . I could arrest you."



(For Course 14, lesson of December 11, "Unto Caesar Shall Thou Go"; for Course 5, lesson of January 29, "We Are Baptized by One Having Authority"; for Course 7, lesson of February 5, "The Church of Jesus Christ Is Restored"; for Course 11, lesson of January 29, "Restoration of the Priesthood"; for Course 13, lesson of February 26, "Priesthood"; for Course 29, lesson of January 1 and March 13, "Position of the LDS Church" and "Restoration of the Priesthood"; and of general interest.)

Monroe J. Paxman is Juvenile Court judge of Utah's Third Judicial District and a member of Bountiful Ward, Provo (Utah) Stake. He attended Brigham Young University, Wichita University, and earned his law degree at University of Utah (1949). He married Shirley Brockbank, and they have seven children. Brother Paxman served as a missionary in the English Mission in 1939, then was transferred to Northern United States. Mission work became imminent. Currently he teaches an adult Sunday School class. He and Sister Paxman have written three books on family recreation.

are on Indian land," she said, respectfully, but with intense feeling. "I am member of true Ute Council. I have authority. I could arrest you."

I again stated that while I respected her right to differ, it was my duty to note her objections, rule on them, and proceed with the hearing. Then if she desired to obtain a ruling of a higher court, she could file an appeal. She sat in silence through the remainder of the hearing.

#### What Conditions Authority?

Afterwards, the boy apparently settled down and was not again referred to the court. But his aunt did not need to file an appeal to prove that her contention was right. In another state, a similar case was taken to a Federal Court of Appeals, which based its decision on documents of agreement between United States officials and the leaders of the Indians. The court ruled that reservation offenses by Indian children are within the powers of the tribal courts, not the state courts!

What an apt comparison there is between this incident and sectarian church representatives claiming authority to act for God on earth!

Like many representatives who act for sectarian churches, I was sincere in acting for the State of Utah. I honestly thought I had authority to act in the case. I intended only to do good. Obviously, honorable intentions and honest motives did not give me authority. Neither do these commendable qualities add anything to those who try to do good in God's name but who have no direct authority to act for Him. I had been duly appointed by the authority I respected—officers of the State of Utah.

Likewise, many officials of the world's churches display credentials of appointment from important officials. Yet, in my Indian case, other events unknown to me had occurred which clearly eliminated my authority to act in the case. Similarly, officials of the world's churches seem not to realize that an event they know not of, or one they fail to recognize, eliminates any authority they might claim to have from God. That event is the latter-day restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the conferring again of its priesthood on the leaders of the Church.

#### Weighing All the Facts

Just as leaders of other churches point to the Bible as their authority to act, so I based my authority as judge on a book: *The Statutes of Utah*. That book said nothing about Indians being excluded from the jurisdiction of the court over which I was designated to preside. But another document—a treaty with the Indians—had to be weighed with the Utah statutes in order to make a fully considered decision.

In the case of earthly authority to act for our Father in heaven, other documents exist—the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price—which need to be weighed with the Bible in order to reach a fully considered decision.

A just God will give appropriate credit to all men for the good they do, but the authority to "bind on earth," to act for Him, is reserved for those exercising His Holy Priesthood, rightly conferred by those who have authority to give it.

Library File Reference: PRIESTHOOD.

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# NEXT MONTH IN YO

Lessons during the month of January, 1967

## A CAPSULE GUIDE FOR HOME TEACHERS AND PARENTS TO STIMULATE ATTENDANCE AT SUNDAY SCHOOL

### A Gospel of Love COURSE 1 (age 3)

*On the outside looking in*—that's where Course 1 children will be this month. They will become aware of the family as a unit. They will discuss who can be part of a family: the child himself, mother and father, baby, brothers, sisters, grandparents.

### Beginnings of Religious Praise COURSE 1a (age 4)

*Who made the beautiful world for children to enjoy?* Our Heavenly Father planned the world very carefully. He planned it so we could have the daytime to work and play. He planned the night so all boys and girls could sleep. He planned for all children to have parents to love and take care of them.

### Growing in the Gospel, Part II COURSE 3 (ages 5, 6)

*Where did we live before we came to this earth?* In January students will talk about the kingdom of heaven as it was presided over by God the Father, His Son, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost. They will discuss the Godhead; what each member did

and why each of them is important to us. Deep doctrine? Yes, but every child, without realizing the full meaning, perhaps, can absorb much.

### Living Our Religion, Part II COURSE 5 (ages 7, 8)

*Faith in what? And how do I get it?* January lessons will help students to realize that faith is more than mere believing. Faith generates action and action equals work. Children will be guided to realize that there is a need for (1) faith in their Heavenly Father, (2) faith in themselves and their ability to do things, and (3) faith in others. As they develop this kind of faith they will find peace of mind, inner strength, and true happiness.

### History of the Church for Children COURSE 7 (ages 9, 10)

*What is a prophet? What is a prophecy?* Why were there prophets in the ancient world? Why do we have prophets in our time? How did Joseph Smith become a prophet? What is the Book of Mormon? How did we get it? Testimony strengthening answers to these and other questions will be offered in January. The need for priesthood restoration, organization of the Church, baptism by authority—all these will be impressed on the minds of students.

### Scripture Lessons in Leadership COURSE 9 (ages 11, 12)

*Who wants to play "Follow the leader"?* And who wants to be the leader? Most children want to be the leader some of the time. January lessons will offer some ways to develop the basic qualities needed for leadership: humility, courage, unselfishness, loyalty, and love.

### History of the Restored Church COURSE 11 (ages 13, 14)

*In the beginning . . .* There are many beginnings,



# UR SUNDAY SCHOOL

and the one to be discussed in January is the beginning of the dispensation of the fulness of times: a fascinating study of the care with which the Lord prepared the Prophet Joseph Smith and taught him the organizational requirements necessary to usher in the last dispensation.

## Principles of the Restored Church at Work COURSE 13 (ages 15, 16)

*Eternal Progression.* The sun was nearly touching the low hills in the west when the girls topped a gentle rise in sight of the summer camp. A cool breeze shook the shrubs and set the flowers and trees to dancing.

"Oh!" cried Evelyn, "I love it! See the masses of wild flowers everywhere. The higher we go the more beautiful they are. I could go on, and on, and on, forever!"

That is it. That is eternal progression—to go on and on to higher levels, more beautiful views, and sweeter flowers. January lessons will give students a hint of vistas to come.

## Life in Ancient America COURSE 15 (ages 17, 18)

*Who are you? Who were the ancestors who made you what you are?* What about those ancient grandparents who lived in the Fertile Crescent and wore the kind of clothes we see in the movies—loose, flowing robes to protect their heads and necks from the desert sun? Students in this course will learn about their literal ancestors who lived in the promised land.

## The Articles of Faith COURSE 19 (ages 19-22)

*What is the number one news story of all time?* A famous newsman said it would be that a human had

died and had come back from the dead. Students of this course will thrill again to the testimonies of prophets, ancient and modern, that such an event actually took place! They will thrill again to the true story of the boy prophet, Joseph Smith.

## Gospel Living in the Home COURSE 25 (adults)

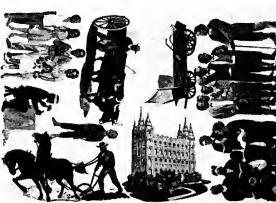
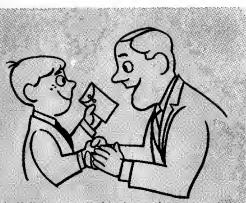
*Why is love basic? Why should we love our enemies?* Anger and revenge, spurred by hate for an enemy, cause tensions which will destroy our mental equilibrium and injure our physical well-being. January lessons tell us how we can love our enemies and how we can make our homes heaven on earth.

## The Gospel in the Service of Man COURSE 27 (adults)

*We must know the universe precisely as it is or we cannot find our right place in it.* We can learn to know the universe through our five usual senses, with the help of the sixth sense. Then we must apply *reason* to what we learn. We must come to know why God is God, and why man is man and how we must work together for the common good. January lessons are both stimulating and thrilling to mind and spirit.

## A Marvelous Work and a Wonder COURSE 29 (adults)

*Would you like to believe and know that God is your real Father, with a tangible body in form like your own?* Lessons will help you *believe* by discussing the evidence we have of the personality of the Father and the Son. They will help you understand how you can *know* for yourself. False doctrine will be discussed, along with the prophecy of a "marvelous work" to come forth.





A VIETNAM HERO WEARS . . .

Art by Ron Wilkinson.

# THE ARMOR OF FAITH IN GOD

by *Burl Shephard*

(From an interview with Major Bernard F. Fisher)

On his first Sunday in Ben Hoa, Major Bernard Francis Fisher decided to look up some other members of the Church. However, just before lunch that day, a voice out of the blue declared: "LDS Church services will be held at 7:30 this evening."

The voice was that of Captain Ray Young from Pocatello, Idaho. Flying his helicopter overhead, he was announcing by loudspeaker the place where all interested servicemen could attend a meeting that evening.

Voices out of the blue! Sometimes they are audible; sometimes they speak softly within the individual. Sometimes they offer comfort; sometimes they challenge to action. To Bernie Fisher, a major in the U. S. Air Force and an active Latter-day Saint, the voice is an inner feeling of conviction in answer to one question: "Is it right, or is it wrong?"

MAJOR BERNARD F. FISHER



Major Fisher believes that in his professional life in the Air Force, where religion is concerned he should "walk softly but carry a big stick." Major Fisher's "big stick" is his faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ and his quiet determination to live according to its principles. A capable, unpretentious, but highly skilled pilot of some 14 years experience, he says:

"In the Church you don't have to flaunt what you believe before others, or be loud about it. But if, inside you, you know something is right, then I believe you should go at it with all you've got. After you make a decision, press forward with all vigor."

It was this kind of discipline, applied over the years, that led Major Fisher early this year to perform one of the most daring and dramatic rescue missions in the history of war.<sup>1</sup> It gained for him a recommendation for the highest award his country can give, the Congressional Medal of Honor. The recommendation read, in part:

*He performed this rescue in the face of some 2,000 armed and nearly victorious hostile troops. His determination, his incredible display of courage in the face of a resolute and heavily armed hostile force, his complete disregard for his own life to effect the rescue of a fellow airman, and his resolve to continue despite advice by others of the severe hazards involved, reflect the highest ideals of American fighting forces above and beyond the call of duty. I personally hold no reservations in recommending Major Bernard F. Fisher for the Medal of Honor.*

*Lt. Gen. J. H. Moore  
Commander, 7th Air Force,  
Vietnam*

The Ashau valley is wrapped in cloud cover most of the time. Situated 40 miles west of Da Nang, and about three miles from the Laotian border, it was last spring a key spot for observing and harass-

<sup>1</sup> For Course 10, lesson of December 11, "I Am with You Always"; for Course 2, lesson of December 11, "Those Who Live Away from Home"; for Course 1, lesson of January 18, "The Good News Has Seen"; for Course 9, lessons of January 8 and 22, and February 26, "A Leader Is Courageous"; "A Leader Loves His Fellowmen"; and "A Leader Has the Courage To Do Right"; for Course 19, lesson of February 23, "The Agency"; to support family home evening lessons 43 and 44; and an interview in the

*"The Saturday Evening Post," June 4, 1966, devoted six pages to this mission. A more detailed description is given there.*

ing the infiltration of North Vietnamese across the border into South Vietnam. The American Special Forces camp there was a triangular fort with a 2500-foot airstrip. On March 9 and 10 the Viet Cong entrenched themselves below the south wall and attacked the fort in a well-planned offensive. Their first attack repulsed, they retreated to the trenches, of which it was later learned they had dug some three miles in two days. From the air that day, the cloud cover extended from 200 feet above the valley floor to 8,000 feet, even hiding the mountain peaks. American fighter planes were milling around above the cloud cover, looking for a hole that would lead them past the peaks to the valley below, when Major Fisher arrived. It was he who found the hole (a light place in the clouds), and all that afternoon he escorted planes down through the clouds on their various missions to Ashau.

By the next day the south wall of the fort had been overrun, and the survivors were holding out in the north bunker. The camp was completely surrounded by the Viet Cong forces. Again it was Major Fisher who found the hole in the clouds and led five other fighter planes through for an 8,000-foot dive to the valley below. To get to Ashau they then had to straighten out and fly six miles down the narrow valley which was less than a mile wide. By this time at least 20 anti-aircraft positions had been mounted on the ridges above the valley. With bullets thudding into their planes, these seasoned pilots flew to the fort at Ashau (one disabled plane returning to base) and began strafing the south wall. On the second strafing run, Major Dafford Myer's plane was hit and caught fire. The engine sputtered and quit. He was too low to bail out. With radio assistance from Fisher, he dropped his bomb load, belly-landed the plane, and managed to get out unharmed. He ran for the side of the runway and hid in the weeds there. Major Fisher came down to 25 feet above the runway to take a look, and all the enemy firepower in the valley burst wide open. "I couldn't hear a great deal of what was going on because of the headset we wear," said Fisher, "but to the fellows on the ground it was obvious we were getting hit pretty hard. The tracers were pretty bad, and they had some big guns in there."

In the ten minutes he flew above the downed pilot, after urgently radioing for a helicopter, Major Fisher weighed the factors involved: (1) he knew his wingmen were experienced pilots who knew how to protect a pilot on the ground, (2) he could not leave the defenseless man long enough to go out through the clouds and guide a helicopter in, (3) a helicopter could not move fast enough to get down and



*Major Fisher and his Douglas Skyraider—the plane he flew in Vietnam.*

*A lover of children, Fisher made friends among youngsters.*



*The hero and his family, taken after his return from Vietnam. Front row, left to right, Robbin, Sister Fisher, Major Fisher, and Timothy. Back row, left to right, Courtney, Scott, and Brad.*

*(Photo Courtesy of The Idaho Trumpet.)*



*(Concluded on following page.)*



A strict Latter-day Saint himself, Major Fisher is popular with others in the service and makes friends easily.

back up again through the ring of heavy fire, (4) his home base did not recommend his going to the rescue and he himself knew it was unwise, but (5) the downed man would never get out alive if Fisher didn't go after him quickly; the Viet Cong didn't take prisoners in battle. Analyzing all these factors, Bernie Fisher, who had asked for service in Vietnam because he wanted combat experience to train other pilots, asked himself only one question, "Is it right, or is it wrong?"

"Many times you feel that you should do something when obviously the facts indicate you should not," Fisher said. "Fact-wise, I shouldn't have gone down there at all. I didn't plan on it. And I waited. Finally, I had to, I just felt it was the thing to do. Then I thought, 'Well, I've never been let down before.'"

Minutes later he had plowed up the ground at the end of a too-short runway, turned his plane around in a cloud of dust and taxied back down, helped pull the downed man aboard, and taken off into the blue in a bullet-riddled plane whose tires were shredded to ribbons—but neither man had a scratch on him.

That, in brief, is the story. Incredible? Yes, impossible. But it happened. No one knows all the answers. Unaccountably, the maintenance crew had put new tires on his plane that morning and had given the whole aircraft a more thorough going-over than it had ever had before. Brakes, engine, guns—everything was in top condition. Even the interior of the plane was waxed and polished to the extent that Fisher made a note of it in his report for the day. He is quick to give credit, too, to the three wing-men who protected him during the rescue. "Certainly they were a big factor in my decision," he said. "Without them we could not have succeeded."



The whole family seems to be air-minded as the major spends an evening with his boys in one favorite pastime.

It is an interesting coincidence that professional golfer Billy Casper, a convert to the Church of two months, happened to be in Pleiku that day after finishing a golf tournament in the Philippines, along with Harold (Hack) Miller, *Deseret News* sports writer, when Fisher and Myers returned. To Billy Casper, Fisher's experience was no less than a miracle. He knew that this faithful elder in the Church had been protected that day against 2,000 enemy troops on the airfield during his rescue of a fellow pilot. (See story of Billy Casper in November issue of *The Instructor*, page 429.)

Bernard Fisher was reared in Clearfield, Utah. He attended Boise Junior College for two years and received his commission in 1951 as an R.O.T.C. cadet at the University of Utah. In 1948 he married Realla Johnson, a graduate nurse, in the Salt Lake Temple. In Homestead, Florida, where they were stationed before going to Vietnam, Major Fisher was Sunday School superintendent. Now in Germany, he is counselor to the branch president at Hahn, and Sister Fisher is counselor in the Primary presidency there. The Fishers are very proud of their five boys: Bradford, 16; Courtney, 14; Robin, 13; Tim, 10; and Scott, 6.

"You must have a code to live by," says Major Fisher. "In life, you have to have a basis for decision, just as in writing a paper you first make an outline or you won't be consistent. Christ's teachings were perfect. He told us how to live, and any time we run afoul of what He tells us, we're in trouble. The drunkard would not be a drunkard if he had a basis for loyalty. I have to be loyal to myself—if I do what I think is right, I can do no more than that."

The "big stick" of faith has served him well.

Library File Reference: FAITH.



*Junior  
Sunday  
School*

# WHY AND WHY NOT?

**WHY DO CHILDREN REMAIN IN JUNIOR  
SUNDAY SCHOOL AFTER THEY HAVE  
BEEN BAPTIZED?**

The Sunday School plan for Gospel study is a program of advancement through specified courses after a child of three or nearly three years of age enrolls in Course 1. Age enters into the picture only at the beginning. As children become four years old, they are placed either in Course 1a (all odd years) or Course 2 (all even years). In either case they are to be four years old on the first of January. The group which is set up with four-year-olds moves through sequential courses in Junior Sunday School until Course 5 has been completed. Baptism does not interrupt this orderly advancement.

As a child reaches Course 6, he remains with the same class members and moves with them into Senior Sunday School. He stays with them until the adult classes are reached, which provide some differentiation of Sunday School study.

—Junior Sunday School Committee.

# THE BEST FROM THE PAST

This is a supplementary chart to help teachers find good lesson material from past issues of *The Instructor*. Available magazines are 35¢ each. Reprints of many center spread pictures (and flannelboard characters since May, 1965) are available for 15¢ each.

We encourage Latter-day Saints to subscribe to and save *The Instructor* as a Sunday School teacher's encyclopedia of Gospel material.

Abbreviations on the chart are as follows:

First number is the year; second number is the month; third number is the page. (e.g. 60-3-103 means 1960, March, page 103.)

Fbs—flannelboard story. Cs—center spread.

Isbc—inside back cover. Osbc—outside back cover.

Conv—Convention Issue.

\*—not available. Use ward library.

SUNDAY SCHOOL COURSE NUMBER														
Feb.	1	1a	3	5	7	9	11	13	15	19	25	27	29	
5	60-12-393 62-12-414	60-2-Cs* 60-7-Cs, Fbs	60-12-402, 420	60-12-402 62-12-402	59-9-Cs 60-12-400, 424	60-12-426 64-12-464, Fbs	64-12-464 61-1-2 64-12-461, 474	60-12-398, 408, 426	54-10-Cs* 60-3-86 60-12-428	60-12-396	60-12-398, 408, 426	53-9-Cs* 60-12-400, 424		
12	63-1-18 64-6-Cover	61-11-Fbs 62-12-410 64-12-476	62-12-Fbs 66-12-Isbc	54-11-Cs 62-12-402	60-12-424	60-1-3 62-12-Fbs	60-12-402, 424 62-4-123 62-12-406	54-9-Cs* 60-12-398, 426	59-11-Cs* 59-12-Cs 60-12-400	62-12-410 64-12-Cs	60-12-395 64-12-480	60-12-404	53-9-Cs* 60-12-400 64-12-472	
19	64-6-227 65-1-18	61-3-Fbs 62-12-410	62-1-Cs* 61-2-56	60-4-116* 61-1-Cs 61-4-Cs 62-2-44*	61-1-Cs 61-4-Cs 61-7-217	54-9-Cs* 62-12-426 61-1-Cs 61-4-Cs 61-7-217	54-1-Cs* 64-12-478 62-8-Cs	60-12-Cov- er, 404 62-12-410, 418 64-12-466, 480, 482	54-9-Cs* 54-10-Cs* 64-12-478 64-12-461, 480, Cs 66-11-433	60-12-408 62-12-410 64-12-476 66-11-433	62-12-416 64-12-476 64-12-Cs 66-11-433	60-12-428 64-12-461, 482, Cs	60-12-398, 408, 420	60-12-398, 408, 420
26	61-8-280 62-12-414 64-1-Cover	62-12-Fbs 65-2-Cs 64-12-472	66-12-400 60-4-116* 60-9-318	60-3-106 61-1-Cs 61-7-217	62-12-406 64-12-482	54-1-Cs* 54-2-Cs* 59-2-Cs* 61-4-Cs 61-7-217 62-2-44*	59-9-Cs 60-12-402, 406, 420	54-10-Cs* 60-12-424 62-12-397, 406, 426 66-11-Isbc 64-12-472	60-12-400, 408 61-1-4 62-12-397, 403 64-12-472, 474, 478	60-12-404 62-12-416 64-12-482 Review	56-10-Cs* 58-1-Cs 61-1-2 62-3-Cs			

# TOBACCO and the Spirit of Man

by W. Dean Belnap\*

**NOTE:** There have been sweeping changes in the medical profession's estimate of the effect of tobacco on the health of smokers. To Latter-day Saints, who have accepted the Word of Wisdom as the word of God, this comes as no surprise; but it is nonetheless gratifying to have this support of Gospel principles from the scientific community. Dr. Belnap explores another area—the effect of tobacco in giving a deceptive sense of freedom from anxiety. His forceful presentation invites thoughtful appraisal.

—Henry Eyring.

Smoking is a bad habit. There seems to be no place for a person who doubts this to stand in sound argument. Time and time again the medical and psychological sciences have brought forth evidence which points toward the destructive nature of the cigarette. In addition to the evidences recently found which link cigarette smoking to lung cancer, a number of authorities have made other interesting and arresting discoveries respecting the cigarette. E. A. Murphy and J. F. Mustard (14)<sup>1</sup> discovered that chronic smokers were less able to withstand the effects of radiation than were nonsmokers, and that smoking interfered with action of the bone marrow, the part of the body that manufactures blood. A. J. Schaffer (19) points out that there is a higher premature birth rate among children whose mothers smoke than among nonsmokers, and that the mortality rate of these premature births was higher among offspring of smokers than of nonsmokers. There is a good deal of evidence, according to A. R. Lindesmith and A. I. Strauss (12), that in general, nonsmokers are more prone to be "steady and dependable, hard workers, with stable marriages," and that they have statistically less difficulty with marriage than do smokers.

\*W. Dean Belnap is a practising physician and surgeon, and a member of the faculty of the University of Utah College of Medicine. He earned his M.D. from the U. of U. (1947) and an F.A.A.P. award from the University (1950). He has been named a Playtex-Park Fellow in Pediatric Neurology (1950) and a Public Health Service Fellow in Child Psychiatry (1951). Brother Belnap has served as a stake missionary in Salt Lake City and Washington, D.C., and as a guide on Temple Square for more than 8 years. He is a member of the priesthood Genealogy Committee. He married Mary Ellen Bennett and they have five children.

<sup>1</sup>Research references listed at end of article.

And so the evidence piles up. Bit by bit, piece by piece, a great mass of evidence is accumulating to substantiate from a purely scientific viewpoint the words of the Lord that "tobacco is not for the body." Nicotine in large quantities can take over the nervous system, causing severe convulsions (8) (24). Smoking causes a man to perform at an altitude of as much as 5,000 feet higher than he really is, because of the oxygen space it preempts in his blood (11).

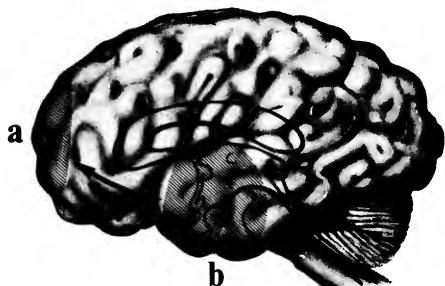
No one will argue that tobacco in large quantities is harmful, but there are those people who argue that tobacco in small or moderate quantities is *not* harmful. They are very persuasive as they say, "Granted, a large amount of tobacco is harmful. So is an excess of sun. It can cause sunstroke or sunburn. But sun in moderate amounts is healthful. It's the same with tobacco. Taken in small amounts, it is beneficial to man. It keeps him from being nervous."

Then there are those who say, "You mean one cigarette a day is harmful? Why, you can't even measure that much nicotine."

The sad thing is that these people are wrong on all counts, and this is one of the things that makes tobacco such a good tool of Satan. For tobacco, no matter how small the amount, does a great deal of harm. It does this in an area most people don't even consider when thinking of tobacco; yet one which is probably the most vital of all, and in which tobacco can wreak great destruction: the area of the higher spiritual centers of mankind—the conscience, and the physical area that houses it.

Let us clear up a common misconception about tobacco. *There is no such thing as an amount of nicotine that cannot be measured and that has no influence on the human system.* The frightening thing is that even a small amount of nicotine (or

<sup>1</sup>The prefrontal lobe of the brain (a) is the seat of man's conscience. It acts to inhibit the midbrain (b) where the primitive, instinctual drives of man originate. A loss of prefrontal lobe function allows the animal-like impulses of man to dominate his personality.



alcohol) may alter the makeup of the partaker's personality so that it becomes difficult for him to realize his full potential as a child of God.

My research has indicated that tobacco, even in small amounts, has the power to kill the soul. To understand this better, let us examine the makeup of the brain of man, or at least the part that makes him a unique species.

The portion of man's brain that separates him from the rest of the animal world is called the prefrontal lobe. This is a portion of the brain which rests behind the forehead and above the eyes. It is a portion of the cerebral cortex which is highly refined and belongs to man alone. It is the seat of what is generally called the conscience; the ability to decide between right and wrong. Here is found the perceptibility to weigh in the balance the opposites which we experience in this earth life. It decides between pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow, love and hate, anger and serenity, good and bad. The things which make man an anxious, tense creature are also centered in this portion of the brain, along with the things which give him love for his family and the desire to show kindness to others. It is the prefrontal lobe which makes man literally a "child of God," which gives him the ability to reason and to attach emotional significance to his reasoning. Dr. Lecomte du Noüy once remarked that the presence of this prefrontal lobe made the difference between man and animal greater than the difference between living and nonliving. This prefrontal lobe is, then, something which humans should treasure, for it is this which brings them closer to God. It is the highest and most sensitive portion of the nervous system.

#### **What Tobacco Attacks First**

It is this portion of the human system that tobacco attacks first. In an experiment using higher mammals, B. Silverstrini (23) injected nicotine into their systems. Tiny amounts influenced first the frontal lobe and psychomotor centers (animals do not have a prefrontal lobe). Next the sensory areas were affected, and then the basal ganglion, which houses the more vital and primitive functions of the body. It is easy to see from this that in a man, whose prefrontal lobe is even more sensitive than the frontal lobe, even minute amounts of nicotine can be felt. H. H. Perlman, A. M. Dannenberg, and S. Sokoloff (15) demonstrated that detectable levels of nicotine penetrated the breast milk of mothers and were sufficient to alter the physiology of the child. B. E. Hasama pointed out that infinitesimally small amounts of nicotine, circulating in the bloodstream, can have measurable influence on the nervous system. Dilutions of only one part of nicotine

to a million parts of blood are all that are necessary to bring about physiological changes in the electrical rhythms of the brain (3) (8) (23) (24) (27). So the idea that a small amount of nicotine is not noticed is false. The higher centers of the brain are affected, even though there may be no outward sign.

#### **A Conscience Lobotomy**

Just what is the effect of nicotine on the brain, and how harmful is it? In order to answer this, it is necessary to discuss further the prefrontal lobe. Remember that the prefrontal lobe is the functional center for the conscience of mankind. A few years ago psychiatrists, realizing that many of man's anxieties were seated in the prefrontal lobe, attempted to cure psychotic patients by performing an operation known as a prefrontal lobotomy. That is, they severed the prefrontal lobe from the rest of the brain, so that it became inoperative. Oddly enough, many of the patients so treated were "cured." They no longer had the anxieties which had plagued them.

But, although they were intellectually normal, they were neither happy nor sad. They demonstrated a flat, bland indifference to the things they should have cared about intensely. These people had had removed from them the thing that Lehi in the Book of Mormon says is so essential to man's salvation: the ability to weigh opposites and to become emotionally involved in the struggle that is life. (See 2 Nephi 2.) Researchers have indicated that this is what happens to the smoker. He performs a functional or partial lobotomy on himself.

It will be remembered that nicotine attacks the higher centers of the system first. Nicotine contracts the small arterioles that feed blood to the prefrontal lobe, depriving it of oxygen and causing it to lose partial function for a time; or it inhibits the permeability of the cell membrane itself, temporarily throwing it out of control (9) (20) (21) (22). Dr. Wilder Penfield, the world-famous professor of neurosurgery, experimented with the influence on the prefrontal lobe of, among other things, alcohol and tobacco. His research demonstrated that the use of alcohol or tobacco, even in small amounts, leads to a loss of prefrontal lobe function. This testing was done through the use of electroencephalographic recordings, highly sensitive amplifications of the electrical rhythms of the brain. Psychometric testing has disclosed that individuals who smoke or drink, even in small amounts, lose their ability to place the proper emotional interpretation on facts and ideas. This demonstrates conclusively the partial loss of prefrontal lobe function (1) (2) (4) (5)

*(Continued on following page.)*

(6) (10) (13) (26). It is also most interesting that one scientist, R. L. Wexler (25), and the team of W. B. Geiger and H. S. Alpers (7), have pointed out a close parallel between the physiologic and psychic effects of nicotine and the new drug LSD (D-Lysergic Acid). Both nicotine and LSD, they point out, are specific antagonists of a vital chemical in the nervous system called serotonin. A decrease in serotonin in the central nervous system brings about behavior similar to mental illness.

#### Superego Versus Ganglion

Why is this so damaging to the spiritual well-being of man? The answer lies in the psychologic makeup of man that corresponds to his physical makeup. There is a delicate balance in the mind, or spirit, of man. Two forces are at work, not figuratively, but literally and actually, within him. They are the prefrontal lobe, the conscience, called by psychologists the Superego, and the basal ganglion, called the Id. In the basal ganglion are found the more animal responses of man, the pleasure impulses. It is partially the job of the Superego to keep the Id from getting out of line and becoming the controlling center of the brain. The use of tobacco makes this nearly impossible (16) (18).

The prefrontal lobe is the seat of man's anxieties. It is here that his worries and fears originate. Smoking dulls these fears. Let's follow the process. A man is nervous. He smokes a cigarette and immediately feels better, more sure of himself. How did this happen? The nicotine in the cigarette performed a minute and shortlived lobotomy, partially cutting off the prefrontal lobe and relieving the anxiety. The man has hurt himself in two ways. First, he has temporarily, and to a degree, cut himself off from the most divine part of his nature; and he has given his basal ganglion, the Id, the ascendancy over the Superego.

The Id, according to Drs. Alfred R. Lindesmith and Anselm I. Strauss (12), enjoys this freedom from the restraining influences of the Superego, enjoys the pleasurable sensations it receives, and demands of the psyche, or the Ego, a repetition of this experience. When the effect of nicotine wears off, the Superego, the prefrontal lobe, begins to function again; but the Id is still demanding a repetition of the pleasurable experience. To give it what it wants, and to ease the tension which has come back again, another cigarette is smoked, and the cycle is repeated. However, each time this happens, the Id, the basal ganglion, gains in power. This is the basis of addiction. It is noteworthy

that the spiritual endowments of man, the things that make him man, as separated from the animal world, are what suffer most when this happens. Again, psychometric tests show that the ability of the individual to place the proper emotional interpretation on the thought processes is impaired. In other words, the individual loses the fine edge of his ability to love, hate, feel joy and emotional pain (1) (2) (4) (5) (6) (10) (13) (26).

#### Anxieties Are Guideposts

It is almost comic to speak of a person remaining a moderate smoker all his life, when we recognize the extremely powerful, habit-forming tendencies of tobacco. The basis of this addiction lies in our anxieties. We all have problems and worries, and whenever this anxiety is falsely or artificially eliminated, the more basal nature of man wells forth, and with it a feeling that demands he repeat the experience.

The loss of prefrontal lobe function eliminates the guilt about smoking and the anxiety of what smoking will do. Thus, we have a person smoking so that he can stop worrying about smoking. That is like the person who drinks to forget that he is a drunkard. The more the guilt is eliminated, the deeper the indulgence in the harmful agent, until the smoker finds he is almost free of the guilt feeling; and, of course, if the guilt is reduced in one area of taboo, the guilt or anxiety in other areas is reduced also.

Guilt is an asset to all of us. It plays a positive role in making people feel responsible for their actions. Generally, a light smoker becomes a heavy smoker; and if a person says he is a "moderate smoker," he is merely describing a point on a line—not a fixed position.

The Lord has given us our anxieties for a good reason. He says we are to be "anxiously engaged in a good cause." Our guilts and anxieties are indicators and guideposts put in us for our use. When we feel overly anxious, or if we feel guilty, this is an indication that we may be out of tune with the Lord, and that our spiritual position may need a little strengthening. There is only one real way to relieve tension: by *complying* with the laws of the Gospel, not by smothering them in tobacco smoke. Deadening the conscience with nicotine is analogous to deadening all pain receptors in the body, so that while we may not feel pain, neither do we notice that our hand is being burned by flame.

Perhaps President McKay had this function of our conscience in mind when he said, "To have the approval of your conscience when you are alone with

(Concluded on page 469.)

I WOULD like to discuss with you the three R's of free agency: the *right* of choice, the *responsibility* of choice, and the *results* of choice. How grateful I am that a wise and loving Heavenly Father gave us free agency! In the very beginning, after He had pointed out to Adam the trees in the Garden from which he might freely eat, He then directed Adam's attention to one tree and advised him that he should not partake of the fruit thereof. He then added, ". . . Nevertheless, thou mayest choose for thyself, for it is given unto thee. . . ." (Moses 3:17.)

# THE THREE "R's" OF CHOICE\*

by Elder Thomas S. Monson  
of the Council of the Twelve

A black and white line drawing of a man in a suit and tie. He is looking slightly to the right with a thoughtful expression, his right hand resting against his chin. The background is filled with a repeating grid of the words 'RIGHT', 'RESPONSIBILITY', 'RESULTS', and 'RES' in a bold, sans-serif font.

We have been given the right to choose. William C. Gregg illustrated this beautifully in the words of his poem:

*Know this, that every soul is free  
To choose his life and what he'll be;  
For this eternal truth is given  
That God will force no man to heau'n.*

*He'll call, persuade, direct aright,  
And bless with wisdom, love, and light,  
In nameless ways be good and kind,  
But never force the human mind.<sup>1</sup>*

## No Neutral Ground

We have the right to choose; but, likewise, we have the responsibility to choose. We cannot be neutral. There is no middle ground. The Lord knows this; Lucifer knows this. There is a great contest being waged for the souls of men. On the one hand, Lucifer has attractively painted his road signs. Have you seen them? They are bright and most enticing. They read like this: "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die." "It's the popular thing to do." Another one may read: "Just this once won't matter."

On the other hand, the Lord has prepared His road signs for our guidance. They read:

*Fear God and keep his commandments. (See II Kings 17:36-39.)*

*As ye sow, so shall ye reap. (See Galatians 6:7.)*

There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated—And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated. (Doctrine and Covenants 130:20-21.)

Thus we have one of two roads to follow. To us has been given the responsibility of choice.

## Song for the Soul

Intelligent men have invented certain safeguards to warn us against danger. When I served in the United States Navy, sonar was in its infant stages. Those of you who have been in the service know that sonar is the device which warns of an impending vehicle or ship, or other obstacle. Sound waves are monitored. The operator becomes accustomed to listening for a repetitive beep. When it becomes other than the normal pattern, he knows danger is

*(Continued on following page.)*

(For Course 6, lesson of December 18, "What It Means To Be a Latter-day Saint"; for Course 10, lesson of December 18, "Looking Toward the Future"; for Course 23, lesson of December 11, "Practical Religion—Spirituality"; for Course 5, lessons of January 15 and March 12, "Faith in Things Not Seen" and "We Have Been Given the Right To Choose"; for Course 19, lesson of February 5, "Free Will"; for Course 25, lesson of January 15, "Steps in Eternity"; for Course 27, lesson of January 19, "Man's Free Agency"; and of general interest.

\*Excerpted from Speeches of the Year, Extension Publications, Brigham Young University, November, 1963. Used by permission.

<sup>1</sup>Hymns—Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, No. 90

### THE THREE "R's" OF CHOICE (Continued from preceding page.)

at hand and can warn the ship's officers so that the course can be altered.

When I was in school, many young men had white sidewall tires on their automobiles. These automobiles were equipped with what we called "whiskers"—a little metal device attached to the fender of the car. As the car pulled in against the curb, those whiskers would hit the curb and vibrate, echoing inside the car; and they warned the driver he could not go any closer to the curb without damaging his tires.

If man can invent sonar to warn against disaster, and if he can invent whiskers to put on automobile fenders for the protection of white sidewall tires, doesn't it seem reasonable that the Lord would place a warning device within His precious children, to warn them when they are on a detour from His pathway? I bear you my testimony today that we have such a guiding light. It is foolproof, if we will but use it. I refer to the still, small voice, the Holy Ghost:

*But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.* (John 14:26.)

#### "What Should I Do, Dad?"

In addition to the *right* of choice and the *responsibility* of choice, we must consider the *results* of our choices.

My mind goes back to a day when I was approaching my 18th birthday. We were all very fearful. World War II was still being fought, and every young man knew that he had to make a choice. There was not much latitude to the choice: he could choose to go into the army, or he could choose to go into the navy. I enlisted in the navy.

As 44 of us young men stood there in the recruiting office, I will never forget the chief petty officers coming up to us and presenting a choice. They said, "Now, you young men must make an important choice. On one hand, you can be wise and choose to join the regular navy. You can enlist for four years. You will receive the finest schooling. You will be given every opportunity because the navy looks upon you as its own. If you choose not to follow this direction, you can go into the naval reserves. The navy does not have much interest in the naval reserves at this stage of the game. You will receive no schooling. You will be sent out to sea duty. No one knows what your future might be."

Then they asked us to sign on the dotted line.

I turned to my father and said, "What should I do, Dad?"

In a voice choked with emotion, he replied, "I don't know anything about the navy."

That was the position of every father who was there that day.

Forty-two of the 44 enlisted in the regular navy for four years. The 43rd one could not pass the regular navy physical, so he had to enlist in the reserves. Then they came to me; and I confess to you I sent a prayer heavenward, earnestly hoping that the Lord would answer it. And He did. The thought came to me just as clearly as though I had heard a voice, "Ask those chief petty officers how they chose."

I asked each of those veteran petty officers, "Did you choose the regular navy, or did you choose the reserves?"

Each of them had chosen the reserves.

I turned and said, "With all the wisdom and experience that you have, I want to be on your side."

I chose the reserves, which meant that I enlisted for the duration of the war, plus six months. The war ended, and within a year I was honorably discharged from the service. I was able to continue my schooling. I had the privilege of serving in many Church capacities. Who knows how the course of my life might have been changed had I not taken that moment to call upon my Heavenly Father for guidance and direction in what might appear, to some, to be a minor decision!

#### No Minor Decisions

No decision that young Latter-day Saints make is minor or unimportant, for decisions determine our progress on the road to eternal life.

Would you like to hear about a missionary who was prompted to make a wise choice? He was new in the work and was assigned to labor in the city of Oshawa, Ontario, Canada, with a veteran missionary as a companion. They called at the home of a family by the name of Pollard. They knocked, and Mr. Pollard let them in. He invited them to present their material. After he had heard their message, and after he had prayed with them, it seemed as though the spirit of the adversary came over him, and he railed against the elders and told them to leave and not come back again. As he showed them to the door, he said, "You can't tell me that you really believe Joseph Smith is a prophet of God, anyway." The door slammed shut. The two dejected missionaries walked away.

This young missionary turned to his senior com-

panion and said, "We didn't answer Mr. Pollard's question."

The senior companion explained the futility of attempting to return.

But the young elder said, "I'm going back. I won't feel right until I do."

They returned to Mr. Pollard's door and knocked on it. He opened the door and said, "I thought I told you fellows to leave."

The next decision took all the strength of character and all the fortitude that this young man could muster, for his senior companion did not give him much help. I heard Mr. Pollard himself describe the experience. He said, "That missionary looked me in the eye. He hesitated for a moment, and then said, 'Mr. Pollard, as we left your home, you made a statement that we really didn't believe Joseph Smith was a prophet of God. Mr. Pollard, I want you to know that I *know* that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, and that this work is true.'"

After this declaration, the missionaries departed. Mr. Pollard later told me that all the rest of the day and that evening he kept hearing those words echoing through his ears: "I *know* that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God. I know it. I know it. I *know* it."

The next morning he telephoned the missionaries and asked them to come back. They returned to his home and taught him the Gospel. They taught his wife the Gospel. They taught his children the Gos-

pel. All became members of the Church. If you could have accompanied me to the district conference I attended a few years back and heard this man stand on his feet and thank his Heavenly Father for the choice which a young missionary made to return and to bear his witness, you, my brothers and sisters, would be forever anxious to "choose the right when a choice is placed before you."

### Right Decisions Bring Blessings

It was Harry Emerson Fosdick who said, "Men will work hard for money. They will work harder for other men. But men will work hardest of all when they are dedicated to a cause. Until willingness overflows obligation, men fight as conscripts rather than following the flag as patriots. Duty is never worthily performed until it is performed by one who would gladly do more if only he could."

We need not feel that we must be without fault in order to receive the blessings of God. He will take us from where we now stand if we will come to Him. He will build us upward, spiritually, and He will build us up with confidence in ourselves.

I testify that when we choose to do that which is right, the results of our choices will bring joy and happiness to our souls, for the Lord has told us,

... I, the Lord, am merciful and gracious unto those who fear me, and delight to honor those who serve me in righteousness and in truth unto the end. (Doctrine and Covenants 76:5.)

Library File Reference: CHOICE.

## TOBACCO AND THE SPIRIT OF MAN (Concluded from page 466.)

your thoughts is like being in the company of true and loving friends. To merit your own self-respect gives strength of character. Conscience is the link that binds your soul to the spirit of God."

This link, the conscience, is a wonderful gift; and it is an extremely profane thing to deaden and dull it with tobacco. It may be an even greater sin than that which one can render his body with tobacco.

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*In family decisions of spending, buying, moving, using the car, do your children feel left out? Or can they say . . .*

# “We Helped Develop the Rules”?

by Ray L. Jones\*

Family councils have been invaluable in the rearing of our family. Looking back, I don't know how we could have handled the innumerable decisions and individual problems of our family of eight children without these regular business and planning meetings in the home.

Our family councils began in 1950 when I was transferred to California by the Church Department of Education to set up the early morning seminary classes. My job required much travel and attendance at numerous meetings. This took me away from the home much of the time. In addition, I had enrolled in a doctoral program at the University of Southern California and was attending classes evenings and Saturdays. In this situation regular family councils made it possible for us to have the influence of the priesthood with the family through the week, as plans and decisions made at these meetings were implemented.

Our oldest daughter says: "Family councils and home evenings were different in our home. They may have been held on the same night, but they were two different meetings. In our family councils we did the following things:

"1. We discussed plans for the coming week and obtained approval for dates, parties, etc.

"2. Dad's schedule for the week was discussed (in detail) so we knew what nights he would be home.

(For Course 28, lesson of December 4, "Practical Religion—Home and Marriage"; for Course 25, lessons of February 5 to March 5, "Family Government," "Families Bring Problems," "Attitudes Inspire Behavior," and "Understand Your Child's Behavior"; to support family home evening lessons 42 and 44; and of general interest.)

port family home evening lessons 43 and 44, and of general interest.) Dr. Ray K. Johnson, President of Education in San Joaquin Valley, Stockton, California, is his high priest group leader in the Northridge 2nd Ward, Fresno (California) Stake. He served as U. S. Army Chaplain in the Pacific from 1943-1945; he was principal of seminaries in Wyoming, Idaho, Utah, and Southern California from 1952-1956, and was principal of Palo Verde High School at Bakersfield, California, from 1956-1958. He and Sibyl Nelson, his wife, have eight children. One son is in the armed forces in Vietnam; another is stationed at Fort Huachuca, Arizona. Another son is serving in the Andes Mission.



"3. We planned our family vacations and outings.

"4. One major event in each council was the payment of allowances and the settling of personal obligations.

"5. We used family council to set up rules for the family. We helped set the rules. When it came to such things as dating and the use of the family car, some compromises had to be made; but an agreement was reached, and we knew where we stood. These rules helped give me real stability as a teenager, and even though I didn't always like the rules, I appreciated having limits set for me."

There are many family councils which stand out in the memories of our children:

## 1. THE NIGHT WE DIVIDED DAD'S PAYCHECK

Dad's monthly salary was brought home in bills and coins and divided equally among all members of the family. Then, as the monthly bills were brought out, each member of the family "paid" his share of tithing, fast offerings, the house payment, the grocery allowance, car expenses, utilities, savings, etc. When all the bills had been paid, each person had seen exactly where the money went—and how little was left. He also saw clearly those areas in which he could help "stretch" the family income by turning off lights, etc.

## 2. WE BUY AN ENCYCLOPEDIA

Our second oldest son says: "I'll never forget the decision to buy an encyclopedia for the family. I



was only ten at the time, but I actually felt included and was confident that my vote had turned the balance in favor of the purchase. I can still remember the feeling of pride and importance as I consented to have my 'sin money' used to help make the payments. My contribution (how ironic now!) was the pennies I had forfeited to the family bank for leaving my clothes out or not completing a family chore. What a good feeling to know that even my sins were turning out to be constructive!"

#### 3. DAUGHTER MANAGES THE FAMILY

Our oldest daughter recalls: "I remember when I was 15 some of our relatives were stricken with food poisoning, and Mother and Dad had to leave for several weeks. As the oldest child I was left with the responsibility of managing the home while they were gone. We held a family council to explain the situation, laid down some rules, made job assignments for each of the children, and set up a budget for groceries and other essential expenses. With this organization we got along fine while our parents were gone, and we didn't need the assistance offered by neighbors or the ward."

#### 4. WE DISCUSS DAD'S NEW JOB

Another one of our children says: "Once when my father was offered a job which required a move to another city, the matter was presented in family council and we were given an opportunity to discuss the pro's and con's of the new job offer. Helping make the decision gave us the feeling that we be-

longed and that we really had a voice in the final outcome. It also helped each of us accept without complaining the personal problems that this move to a new community brought to each member of the family."

#### Individual Councils

In addition to council sessions with the entire family, we have held "individual councils" with each child. Usually these have been initiated by our awareness of a special problem, the approach of a special event such as baptism, ordination, graduation, or an anticipated departure for college or a mission. In this setting we have been able to give undivided attention to each child, take time to "talk through" his problem or plans, offer encouragement and counsel, and assist in setting worthy goals. The few minutes we have spent with each child in this "individual council" have been rich and rewarding in building bridges of understanding and appreciation with our children.

#### Do Family Councils Work?

Did our family councils really work? Did they help our children develop leadership skills and learn to make decisions wisely? It is perhaps too early to answer these questions fully and objectively, but a missionary son gives this evaluation:

"To me, family council has been an event wherein plans have been made and goals set. It is a sounding board for family problems as well as for pleasant things which have happened to the family. I have enjoyed family council because each member of the family gets an opportunity to express himself and let his feelings be known. It is valuable because it lets parents receive feedback from the family; and in addition, it lets family members know what is happening in the lives of their parents. It gives the children a chance to participate in family decisions and to gain experience in making their own decisions."

My wife sums up the value of family councils in our home when she says: "It seems to me that our problems have increased when we have become 'too busy' for regular meetings, and that our troubles as a family have diminished as we have become wiser in the use of the family council and individual councils."

Library File Reference: FAMILY LIFE.

# HAPPINESS IN A MODERN WORLD

by Keith W. Wilcox\*



After leaving Egypt, the Children of Israel endured the privations of the wilderness to seek a Promised Land, a land which to them became worthy of sacrifice and effort because it was to be "a land that floweth with milk and honey." (Joshua 5:6.) Such foods in profusion would be indeed the realization of a happy, "abundant life" for the Israelites.

In our western society the obtaining of such simple foods is not a problem, nor would such food be accepted as a worthy objective for an "abundant life." Our objectives for a happy life are too often defined in terms of shorter working hours, higher wages, adequate housing, recreation, guarantees against poverty and medical expenses, college education, and time for leisure and travel. Our material goals for the happy, "abundant life" are vastly greater than ever before.

## Materialism and New Philosophies

Simultaneous with our materialism, new philosophies have emerged which have found wide acceptance. Among these is psychoanalysis as taught

(Fox, Course 9, lesson of February 26, "A Leader Has the Courage To Do Right"; for Course 13, lesson of January 1, "Eternal Progression"; for Course 19, lesson of January 1, "Religion"; for Course 25, lesson of January 1, "The Godhead's Love for Mankind"; for Course 27, lessons of February 5 and 19, "God and Man" and "Man Is That He Might Have Joy"; to support family home evening lesson 10, "The Family Home Evening").

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by Freud, suggesting that contentment and peace of mind can be had on the basis that "all behavior can be blamed on others and that the goal of life is not to act morally, but to free ourselves of guilt."<sup>1</sup>

Ernest Hemingway became one of the prophets of the so-called "new morality" when he wrote that, "What is moral is what you feel good after and what is immoral is what you feel bad after."<sup>2</sup> Albert Einstein little realized that the idea of his theory of relativity for the physical world would be adopted by philosophers who postulated that *all* values were relative. The pragmatist, for example, can accept another person's truth as being true for that person, if it serves his needs, while personally rejecting the same truth. In general the new philosophies attack the absolute values of the scriptures. No clear-cut distinction is made between right and wrong. Truth and moral values are not absolute or fixed but vary according to conditions, situations, or need. The accepted common denominator seems to be that each individual must decide for himself what is moral.

With a great part of our society seeking the happy, "abundant life" in materialism while also accepting philosophies which reject personal responsibility and absolute values, the confusion of our age seems assured.

— "Farewell to Freud," by Leslie Lisber; *This Week Magazine*; The Salt Lake Tribune, Sept. 18, 1966, page 5.

<sup>2</sup>See *Sex and Self-control*, by Norman Vincent Peale; Doubleday and Company, Inc., New York, N.Y., 1965; page 62.

### The Absolutes of The Gospel

As members of the Restored Church, we might well examine our objectives and beliefs in the light of our confused times, in order to avoid losing our way. The scriptures are plain concerning the goal of life: ". . . Men are, that they might have joy." (2 Nephi 2:25.) How do we find joy? Can true joy or happiness be found in material attainments? Dr. Henry C. Link says:

*The abundant life . . . can never be defined in terms of money. It can only be defined in terms of habits, that is, character. Happiness never resides in what an individual has, but always in what an individual does. It never consists of what an individual receives, be it much or little, but always of what he gives, not in money but of himself. Certainly it does not reside in an easier life, but in a more active life, especially in old age.<sup>14</sup>*

Can happiness be found by abandoning the absolutes of the Gospel and accepting the so-called "new morality"? Dr. Norman Vincent Peale has this to say about Hemingway and his definition of morality: "What nonsense. Under this weird code of ethics, Hitler could have told himself that slaughtering the Jews was a moral act because it made him feel happy."<sup>15</sup>

### What Religion Has Relinquished to Psychiatry

Can happiness be found in avoiding personal responsibility? It is interesting to note that the Freudian philosophy is under serious attack by many psychiatrists. Dr. Thomas Szasz, professor of psychiatry at State University of New York says, "The adherents of this exaggerated faith . . . use it as a shield of illusion concealing some ugly realities. . . ."<sup>16</sup>

O. Hobart Mowrer, professor of psychology at the University of Illinois says, "I maintain that religion has great potential for serving, and saving, men and women in this world which it has relinquished to psychiatry."<sup>17</sup>

Those who are involved in the total program of the Church know by personal testimony the great happiness that comes in service. As Latter-day Saints, we need to understand and keep before us the simple truths and absolutes of the Gospel. The laws of God are eternal, and they apply to us now as they have always applied to the children of God. Our times are confused, and there is every indication that the immediate future will become more confused.

<sup>14</sup>Henry C. Link, *The Return to Religion*; Pocket Books Edition, August 1965, page 154.

<sup>15</sup>Norman Vincent Peale, *Sin, Sex, and Self-control*, page 62.

<sup>16</sup>"Farewell to Freud," by Leslie Lieber, page 5.

<sup>17</sup>"Farewell to Freud," by Leslie Lieber, page 5.

### The Iron Rod

The prophet Lehi beheld in vision conditions much like our own, in that those seeking the fruit desirable to make them happy found themselves in a mist of darkness.

*Yea, even an exceeding great mist of darkness, insomuch that they who had commenced in the path did lose their way, that they wandered off and were lost.*

*. . . I beheld others pressing forward, and they . . . caught hold of the end of the rod of iron; and they did press forward through the mist of darkness clinging to the rod of iron, even until they did come forth and partake of the fruit of the tree. (1 Nephi 8:23, 24.)*

The "iron rod" is the word of God, and the word of God is found in the scriptures. Every member of the Church should form the habit of reading the scriptures daily. We have prophets to lead us, and a wonderful opportunity to follow the inspired words of the general authorities of the Church. We can become involved completely in Church activity for the good of others. We have been given Gospel standards to understand and to live. We can communicate with the Lord in daily prayer. We need all these to sustain us in our confused times. May we hold tight to this iron rod until it leads us out of "the mist of darkness" to our salvation.

Library File Reference: HAPPINESS.





Art by Ron Wilkinson.

# They Named Him Joseph\*

by Elder Spencer W. Kimball  
of the Council of the Twelve

About fifty years ago, F. M. Bareham wrote the following:

A century ago [in 1809] men were following with bated breath the march of Napoleon and waiting with feverish impatience for news of the wars. And all the while in their homes babies were being born. But who could think about babies? Everybody was thinking about battles.

In one year between Trafalgar and Waterloo there stole into the world a host of heroes: Gladstone was born in Liverpool; Tennyson at the Somersby Rectory; and Oliver Wendell Holmes in Massachusetts. Abraham Lincoln was born in Kentucky, and music was enriched by the advent of Felix Mendelssohn in Hamburg.\*

And, we might add, Joseph Smith was born in Vermont, four years earlier [on Dec. 23, 1805].

(For Course 6, lesson of December 11, "Joseph Smith—The Great Latter-day Prophet"; for Course 12, lessons of December 4 and 11, "Englishmen in Search of Freedom and Freedom Won"; for Course 18, "The March to the Promised Land"; for "Why Joseph Smith Prayed," "An Angel Was Joseph's Teacher," and "Joseph Smith Reads the Sacred Record"; for Course 11, lesson of January 15, "Vision of Joseph Smith"; for Course 15, lessons of February 19 and 26, "To the Land of Promise"; and "In the Land of Promise"; for Course 16, lesson of January 15, "The Promised Land"; for Course 29, lessons of February 5 and 12, "Coming of the Book of Mormon" and "A New Witness for Christ"; to support family home evening lesson 46; and of general interest.)

\*Taken from the 130th annual Conference speeches of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April, 1960, page 93.

\*\*Source unobtainable.

Quoting Bareham further:

But nobody thought of babies, everybody was thinking of battles. Yet which of the battles of 1809 mattered more than the babies of 1809? We fancy God can manage His world only with great battalions, when all the time he is doing it with beautiful babies.

When a wrong wants righting, or a truth wants preaching, or a continent wants discovering, God sends a baby into the world to do it.

While most of the thousands of precious infants born every hour will never be known outside their own neighborhoods, there are great souls being born who will rise above their surroundings. We see with Abraham, ". . . the intelligences that were organized before the world was; and among all these were many of the noble and great ones . . ." and we hear the Lord saying:

*These I will make my rulers . . . Abraham, thou art one of them; thou wast chosen before thou wast born. (Abraham 3:22-23.)*

He commanded Adam:

*Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it. (Genesis 1:28.)*

And the Psalmist sang:

*Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord. . . . Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them. . . . (Psalms 127:3, 5.)*

Regarding these "Men of the Hour," Carlyle said:

*The most precious gift that heaven can give to the earth; a man of genius, as we call it; the soul of a man actually sent down from the skies with God's message to us.*

## Some Dreams Come True

What mother, looking down with tenderness upon her chubby infant, does not envision her child as the president of the Church or the leader of her nation! As he is nestled in her arms, she sees him a statesman, a leader, a prophet. Some dreams do come true! One mother gives us a Shakespeare, another a Michelangelo, and another an Abraham Lincoln, and still another a Joseph Smith!

When theologians are reeling and stumbling, when lips are pretending and hearts are wandering, and people are "running to and fro, seeking the word of the Lord and cannot find it"—when clouds of error need dissipating and spiritual darkness needs penetrating and heavens need opening, a little infant is born. Just a few scattered neighbors in a hilly region in the backwoods even know that Lucy is expecting. There is no prenatal care, nor nurses; no hospital, no ambulance, no delivery room. Babies live and die in this rough environment and few know about it.

Another child for Lucy! No trumpets are sound-

ed; no hourly bulletins posted; no pictures taken; no notice is given; just a few friendly community folk pass a word along. It's a boy! Little do the brothers and sisters dream that a prophet is born to their family; even his proud parents can little suspect his spectacular destiny. No countryside farmers or loungers at the country store, no village gossips even surmise how much they could discuss, did they but have the power of prophetic vision.

#### The Peer of Moses

"They are naming him Joseph," it is reported. But no one knows, not even his parents, at this time, that this infant and his father have been named in the scriptures for 3,500 years, named for and known to their ancestor, Joseph, the savior of Egypt and Israel. Not even his adoring mother realizes, even in her most ambitious dreaming and her silent musings, that this one of her children, like his ancestor, will be the chief sheaf of grain to which all others will lean and the one star to which the son and moon and other stars will make obeisance.

He will inspire hatred and admiration; he will build an empire and restore a church—the Church of Jesus Christ. Millions will follow him; monuments will be built to him; poets will sing of him; authors will write libraries of books about him.

No living soul can guess that this little pinkish infant will become the peer of Moses in spiritual power and greater than many prophets before him. He will talk with God, the Eternal Father, and Jesus Christ, His Son; and angels will be his guest instructors.

His Vermont contemporaries know not that this little one just born will live as few men have lived, accomplish what few men have accomplished, and die as few have ever died, in his own sacred blood in a prison at the hands of assassins as a martyr to everlasting truth!

All expectations are understated. Destiny outdistances all imagination and dreams!

*God moves in a mysterious way  
His wonders to perform;  
He plants his footsteps in the sea  
And rides upon the storm.  
  
Deep in unfathomable mines  
Of never-failing skill,  
He treasures up his bright designs  
And works his sovereign will.*

#### Triplet Infants

During the unfolding of this Smith-flower; during the brief ripening years of this fruit of the loins of that other Joseph of Israel, the world is preparing for the greatest event since the Meridian of Time.

<sup>1</sup>"God Moves in a Mysterious Way," by William Cowper. *Hymns—Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, No. 48.

The triplet infants, Liberty, Freedom, and Justice, are contending for life; a small colonial nation is struggling to its feet; the people from many lands, squirming in the "melting-pot," are firming up, suffering labor pains toward the birth of a divine new program, "a marvelous work and a wonder," the restoration of the Gospel in all its far-reaching detail.

"We fancy," said Bareham, "God can manage His world only with great battalions, when all the time He is doing it with beautiful babies."

O foolish men who think to protect the world with armaments, battleships, and space equipment, when only righteousness is needed!

Having read the pages of history, six thousand years of it, can we not see that God sent His babies to become the teachers and prophets to warn us of our threatening fate? Cannot we read the handwriting on the wall? History repeats itself.

O mortal men, deaf and blind! Can we not read the past? For thousands of years have plowshares been beaten into swords and pruning hooks into spears, yet war persists. Ever since Belshazzar saw the finger writing upon the wall of his palace, the warning reappears. It seems to restate with great forcefulness, Daniel's indictment of an unhumble people:

*... God hath numbered thy kingdom, and fin-  
ished it. . . . Thou art weighed in the balances, and  
art found wanting.*

*And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not hum-  
bled thine heart, though thou knewest all this; . . .  
and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold,  
of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor  
hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy  
breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou  
not glorified.*

*... Blessed be the name of God . . . he remov-  
eth kings, and setteth up kings. . . . (Daniel 5:26-  
27, 22-23; 2:20-21.)*

#### The Lord Is God

The answer to all of our problems—personal, national, and international—has been given to us many times by many prophets, ancient to modern. Why must we grovel in the earth when we could be climbing toward heaven! The path is not obscure. Perhaps it is too simple for us to see. We look to foreign programs, summit conferences, land bases. We depend on fortifications, or gods of stone; upon ships and planes and projectiles, our gods of iron—gods which have no ears, no eyes, no hearts. We pray to them for deliverance and depend upon them for protection. Like the gods of Baal, they could be "talking or pursuing or on a journey or peradventure sleeping" when they are needed most. And like Elijah, we might cry out to our world:

*(Concluded on following page.)*

*How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him. . . . (I Kings 18:21.)*

My testimony to you is, the Lord is God. He has charted the way, but we do not follow. He personally visited Joseph Smith in our world, in our century. He outlined the way of peace in this world and eternal worlds. That path is righteousness. The Prophet Joseph with all the successor prophets proclaiming the ripening of this world in iniquity and the solution of all vexing problems. The Book of Mormon which he translated relates the story of 200 years of peace in the old days, which was the greatest era of happiness of which we have any complete record.

God lives, as does His Son, Jesus Christ; and they will not indefinitely be mocked. May we hearken and repent "for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision . . . the Lord will be the hope of his people. . . ." (Joel 3:14, 16.)

Joseph Smith is a true prophet of the living God and his successors likewise. The mantle of authority and prophecy and revelation and power lies in His choice servant who now leads us, President David O. McKay, and he is God's prophet not only to Latter-day Saints, but to every living soul in all the world. This is my testimony to you, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Library File Reference: SMITH, JOSEPH

## LINDA'S TOYS

by Hazel W. Lewis

*What is all this noise about—  
It's being heard indoors and out,  
Little Linda's tired from play  
And is starting to put her toys away.*

*So flippy flop sailed Raggedy Ann—  
She stopped by the big red crayon can,  
Bumpety bump went the alphabet blocks,  
Right by the train in the big toy box.*

*"Tootity toot," trilled the old tin horn,  
"I'll keep quiet till early morn  
In this toy box so bright and gay,  
Given to Linda on Christmas day."*

*"Look!" cried the toys, "Here comes another,"  
When Pooh Bear was tossed in by Linda's mother.  
"Linda," she laughed, "I'm helping you,  
Very soon you will be through."*

*The big toy box was now shut tight,  
Mother kissed Linda and turned out the light.  
"You've been a good, good girl today  
You're learning to put your toys away."*



(For Course 1, lessons of January 1 and 8 and February 12, "I Am in a Family," "Mother Is in a Family," and "We Work Together In Our Home"; for Course 1a, lesson of January 1, "Heavenly Father Wants Us To Help"; to support family home evening lesson 43.)  
Library File Reference: CHILDREN.

Art by Dale Kilbourn.



Twenty-fourth in a Series To Support the Family Home Evening Program.

# DECISIONS

by Reed H. Bradford

Consider the following statements from the scriptures:

*For behold, it is not meet that I should command in all things; for he that is compelled in all things, the same is a slothful and not a wise servant; wherefore he receiveth no reward. Verily I say, men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness. For the power is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves. . . . (Doctrine and Covenants 58:26-28.)*

*. . . Treasure up in your minds continually the words of life, and it shall be given you in the very hour that portion that shall be meted unto every man. (Doctrine and Covenants 84:85.)*

*I am Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was crucified for the sins of the world, even as many as will believe on my name, that they may become the sons of God. . . . (Doctrine and Covenants 35:2.)*

**A number of basic factors concerning our behavior as human beings are stressed in these passages:**

1. The major goal of life—the goal that should be the hub of the wheel around which all the spokes are integrated, or the trunk of the tree that supports all the other limbs, or the main motif of the symphony around which are integrated all the other themes—is to become, in the full sense of the word, a son or daughter of our Father in heaven, attaining exaltation and eternal life in the celestial kingdom of God. This means that we must apply the

principles of behavior to make our character like the character of our Heavenly Father. Then we will experience the same joy He experiences. We will become worthy to have His influence manifest in our lives. We can be saved and exalted in His kingdom:

*Wherefore, as it is written, they are gods, even the sons of God. (Doctrine and Covenants 76:58.)*

If we are really dedicated to becoming a son or daughter of our Father in heaven—heirs to all that the Father hath—we will make a "personal commitment" to study, understand, and apply His principles. In all the positions we occupy in life, whether child, wife, mother, husband, father, teacher, or administrator, we should constantly seek to find the answer to the following question: "How would my Heavenly Father want me to behave in this position?"

2. Each of us possesses the power to grow—intellectually, emotionally, socially, and spiritually. We have our free agency and therefore the ability to make choices.

3. But if we are to make *wise* choices—the kind of choices that would meet the approval of our Heavenly Father, then we must know the process. He has instructed us to follow in making decisions.

## Guidelines for Action

In the first place, we must know and understand His principles of behavior. These principles are the guidelines for action. Knowing them, we can eliminate questions and problems that might otherwise hinder our progress. Consider an example:

Should we use tobacco or drink alcoholic beverages? The answer is very clear if we know the Lord's instructions concerning the proper treatment of our bodies. He has stated that our bodies are temples of the spirit and that we should not take anything into them that would be injurious or cause them to function inefficiently. Wishing to obtain the maximum joy from living—the joy that is at once the most intensive, extensive, and permanent—we can resist the temptation of receiving a temporary satisfaction. We learn to choose the diamond instead of its glass imitation.

This process of discovering the meaning of His principles must be a constant one. ". . . Treasure up in your minds *continually* the words of life."

If we do this, the Lord will assist us in the growth processes. "For he will give unto the faithful line upon line, precept upon precept. . . ." (Doctrine and Covenants 98:12.)

*(Concluded on following page.)*

(For Course 4, lesson of December 18, "Teachings from the Doctrine and Covenants"; for Course 24, lesson of December 18, "The Prevention of Inactivity"; for Course 28, lesson of December 4, "Practical Religion—Home and Marriage"; for Course 30, lessons of January 8 and 15, "Inspirations of the Spirit"; for Course 31, "Writing and Learning"; for Course 25, lesson of February 12, "Family Government"; to support family home evening lesson 43; and of general interest.)

### **Study It Out**

But many of us misunderstand a most important aspect of making the Lord our partner in making decisions. We assume that whenever we are faced with a problem, the only requirement is that we ask the Lord what to do. Supposing this were true. What would then happen to us? Would we grow in all the different aspects of our personalities? Would we increase our knowledge, wisdom, and skill to the degree that might otherwise be possible?

The Lord has clearly indicated a most important step that we must take, in addition to merely asking Him what we should do. On one occasion Oliver Cowdery attempted to translate the records given to the Prophet Joseph Smith. But he was not successful, and the Lord gave this explanation:

*Be patient, my son, for it is wisdom in me, and it is not expedient that you should translate at this present time.*

*Behold, you have not understood; you have supposed that I would give it unto you, when you took no thought save it was to ask me.*

*But, behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right.*

*But if it be not right you shall have no such feelings. . . . (Doctrine and Covenants 9:3, 7-9.)*

It is quite natural for us, when we do not know the answer to an important problem, to want someone to make the decision for us. But if we follow this inclination, we will deny ourselves opportunity for growth—an opportunity to become more like our Father in heaven.

### **The Example of Others**

Certainly we can go to others to get as much relevant knowledge concerning the situation as possible. We can solicit their aid in analyzing the principles that should guide us to the solution to a problem. We can consider the experiences of others and their possible implication for us. Then we might come to a tentative decision. This forces us to consider our basic values and goals; we must learn to put first things first.

For example: a member of the Church recently was called to preside over one of the missions. He had a very important business that netted him a high income. Accepting this call would mean losing this income for a number of years. But it was not difficult for him to accept the call. On the contrary,

he was thankful for the opportunity to help his fellowmen—his brothers and sisters—hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He loved them more than he loved money.

A young high school student—a member of the Church—saw several of his classmates cheating on an examination. It was not difficult for him to resist the temptation to cheat because he wanted to grow from within and because he wanted the confidence of the Lord. He realized he could not cheat on examinations and then ask the Lord to bless him.

### **Basics for Tentative Decisions**

A *tentative* decision therefore should be reached only after we have met the following conditions:

1. We have obtained a clear understanding of the main goals of life.
2. We understand the basic principles of behavior taught by the Lord.
3. We have obtained all relevant information concerning the situation or problem at hand. We have consulted the best sources possible.

These factors in decision making have implications for every member of the family. For parents, it means that they would not always be “telling” their children what to do. Rather they would give the children an opportunity to think, reflect, and evaluate about the various experiences of life, including its problems. To be sure, when children are young, they may not reach very good “tentative” decisions. In these instances, parents can assist their children in analyzing the situation in more mature ways. But parents will never deny their children the right and opportunity of consulting the Lord—of seeking to let His inspiration manifest itself in the situation.

For children, it means that as soon as possible they should acquire skill in making mature decisions. In order to do this, a study of the principles taught by the Lord should be a *regular* part of their lives. To be really serious about this a part of each day must be set aside for study and reflection. One has to give himself a deadline to do this. Otherwise, the demands of many activities and organizations will prevent him from achieving this goal.

It was said of the Saviour that He “increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.” (Luke 2:52.) Following the procedure outlined above in making our decisions will permit each of us to grow in that same way and attain the goals that Jesus set forth.



BM 84



BM 85

# Samuel and His Two Sons

BY HAZEL W. LEWIS

## THE STORY

Samuel, beloved of God, was a judge and prophet in Israel. He was the last of fifteen judges to rule that people. Samuel was promised to the service of the Lord before he was born. Hannah, his mother, made a covenant that if she could bear a child she would consecrate him unto the Lord. This she did, for Samuel spent his early years helping Eli, the high priest, in the temple at Shiloh; and we find that ". . . the child Samuel grew on, and was in favour both with the Lord, and also with men." (*I Samuel* 2:26.)

The Lord called to the young child Samuel in a dream one night and told him about the iniquities of Eli's sons, and that the house of Eli would be purged. Samuel feared to tell Eli of his vision, but when he was encouraged by the elderly priest:

. . . Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him. And he [Eli] said, *It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good.*

And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord. (*I Samuel* 3:18-20.)

After Eli's sons had been slain by the Philistines in a battle and Eli had died, no one was left at the temple to offer sacrifices on the altar. Samuel returned to his birthplace at Ramah, and from there we find him going into other parts of Israel preaching and teaching, saying:

. . . If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hands of the Philistines. (*I Samuel* 7:3.)

The people repented and tore down their idols. Then they gathered at Mizpeh, where Samuel offered a lamb as a sacrifice and prayed to God to help his people. The Philistines came against the unarmed Israelites in battle, but the Lord delivered them by a terrible thunderstorm which frightened the Philistines away. Apparently the terrified, disorganized Philistines must have dropped their weapons as they ran, for we read that ". . . the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them. . ." (*I Samuel* 7:11.)

Samuel took a stone and put it on the battlefield and called it "Ebenezer," signifying that the Lord had helped them. The Philistines were subdued, and they did not come again into the land of Israel during the days of Samuel. Cities which had been taken from the Israelites were restored to them.

And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. And he went from year to year in circuit to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those places. And his return was to Ramah; for there was his house; and there he judged Israel; and there he built an altar unto the Lord. (*I Samuel* 7:15, 16, 17.)

When he grew too old to travel, he made his two sons, Joel and Abiah, judges, to help him rule over Israel. They were judges in Beersheba.

Now these sons "walked not in his ways." They were too fond of money. They took bribes from the people. They turned away from honesty and truth.

People began to distrust and hate them. Finally, all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel in Ramah. And they said unto him,

*(Concluded on opposite back of picture.)*

SAMUEL  
AND  
HIS  
TWO  
SONS





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From a painting by  
J. J. Tissot  
Courtesy, The  
Jewish Museum, N.Y.C.

# Samuel and His Two Sons

## THE STORY (Concluded)

... Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations. (*I Samuel 8:5.*)

This displeased and hurt Samuel. He loved his sons, even though they were unworthy, and he grieved to think the people wanted a king. So Samuel prayed to the Lord for guidance.

And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me...." (*I Samuel 8:7.*)

The Lord further told Samuel to let the people have a king, but to warn them of some of the sad and disastrous things that would happen if they chose a king for a ruler. Samuel told the people what the Lord had said.

Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us; That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles. (*I Samuel 8:19, 20.*)

Again Samuel listened to the people, and again he told the Lord what the people wanted.

And the Lord said to Samuel, Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king. And Samuel said unto the men of Israel, Go ye every man unto his city. (*I Samuel 8:22.*)

Saul was chosen by the Lord and later anointed by Samuel to be king. Samuel continued to reason with the people, to counsel with them, and to warn them what would happen if they continued in their wickedness. In one of his finest speeches he said:

Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you. But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king. (*I Samuel 12:24, 25.*)

Samuel lived to a good old age; and when he died "... all the Israelites were gathered together, and lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah." (*I Samuel 25:1.*)

## ABOUT THE PICTURE

In his advancing years, when a man's sons should be a joy and a blessing, Samuel finds his sons have caused him much misery and disappointment. The artist Tissot has painted a picture of a meeting between a righteous father and his wayward sons. From the expression on their faces we can tell it has not been a happy one. We can read sorrow and anger on Samuel's face as he realizes that his sons' evil ways are causing trouble and unhappiness for the Israelites. The defiant expressions on the sons' faces make it apparent that their disagreements have not been resolved. The artist has done a masterful piece of work on the facial expressions.

For a more detailed description of Tissot and his work see the centerspread feature "Daniel in the Lion's Den" in the September, 1965, issue of *The Instructor.*

### References:

J. R. Dummelow, *A Commentary on The Holy Bible*; Macmillan Company, New York, N.Y., 1958.

Elie E. Eggermeier, *Eggermeier's Bible Story Book*; Warner Press, Anderson, Indiana.

(For Course 3, lesson of February 19, "Prophets Carried On the Work"; for Course 9, lessons of January 22 and 29 and March 19, "A Leader Is True To His Calling," "A Leader Loves His Fellowmen," and "A Leader Is Patient"; for Course 13, lesson of February 26, "Priesthood"; to support family home evening lessons 43 and 44; and of general interest.)

Library File Reference: SAMUEL.



BM 82

BM 87  
DPH

BM 83



# PROPHETS GIVE US MESSAGES FROM GOD

*A Flannelboard Story by Marie F. Felt*

Have you ever attended or listened to general conference which is held in Salt Lake City, Utah twice a year? If so, you may remember that when the name of the President is presented for the sustaining vote of the Church membership, it is always given as "Prophet, Seer and Revelator, and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." That means we recognize him as the one through whom messages come from God to guide the Church. These messages are always for our guidance and benefit, and it is up to us to hear and obey that counsel and advice. (*End of prologue.*)

God has been very good to the people of the earth. Throughout the ages He has provided prophets who could speak to the people for Him; spokesmen to tell the people that which is right and that which is wrong for them to do. Sometimes through these prophets God tells people what is going to happen hundreds of years later. He did just that with Lehi and his son Nephi who lived 600 years before the birth of Jesus.

You may remember that Lehi was a good man and a prophet to whom the Lord revealed what would happen to the Jews if they did not repent and keep His commandments. God asked Lehi to preach to the people and tell them what would happen if they did not repent, but they would not listen. They became so angry they tried to kill Lehi, but they were not successful because the Lord protected him. He told Lehi and his family, together with a few choice friends, to leave Jerusalem and go to another land where they would be safe. [*End of Scene I.*]

While they were still on their journey, Lehi told his family and friends about some interesting things that were going to happen on earth between that time and 600 years later. He said that the great city of Jerusalem would be destroyed, and that many of the people who lived there would be taken captive to another city called Babylon. There they would be slaves to the Babylonian people. Later,

(For Course 3, lessons of February 22 and March 19, "Nephi Was a Prophet"; and "Jesus Visited America"; for Course 9, lesson of February 19, "A Leader Is Sincere"; for Course 15, lessons of January 22 to February 19, "Lehi and His Family in Jerusalem," "In the Valley of Lemuel," and "To the Land of Promise"; to support family home evening lesson 43; and of general interest.)

when the Lord permitted, some of them would return to their own land.

Another thing Lehi said was that "the Lord God will raise up among the Jews—even a Messiah . . . a Savior of the world." (*1 Nephi 10:4.*)

He also told of a prophet who should come before Jesus, the Messiah, to prepare the people to receive Jesus. This prophet, Lehi said, would baptize with water and he would baptize the Messiah with water. After he had done this, he should "bear record that he had baptized the Lamb [Son] of God, who should take away the sins of the world." (*1 Nephi 10:10.*)

Then Lehi told of how the Jews would kill the Messiah and the things that would happen following that. [*End of Scene II.*]

Nephi listened eagerly to his father. All Lehi said was so wonderful that Nephi, too, wanted to see and know of these same things. He believed strongly that the Lord could make them known to him also.

As he sat pondering or thinking about this, he was "caught away in the Spirit of the Lord" and taken to a very high mountain. (*1 Nephi 11:1.*) He had never been there before. There the Lord asked what he wanted to know, and Nephi said he wanted to behold, or see, the things that his father had seen. He was asked if he really believed what his father, Lehi, had told them. Nephi replied, "Thou knowest that I believe all the words of my father." (*1 Nephi 11:5.*) [*End of Scene III.*]

Then, because of his great faith, Nephi was permitted to see the things that his father had seen. Nephi, however, tells us about these things in more detail. He saw the city of Jerusalem; also Nazareth, where he beheld the Virgin Mary who, the angel said, would be the mother of the Son of God when He should be born on this earth.

Following this, Nephi saw Mary holding the baby Jesus in her arms. He also saw "the Son of God going forth among the children of men; and I saw many fall down at his feet and worship him." (*1 Nephi 11:24.*)

Nephi then saw the prophet, John the Baptist,

baptize Jesus, and "the heavens open, and the Holy Ghost come down out of heaven and abide upon him in the form of a dove." (*1 Nephi* 11:27.)

In addition, he saw Jesus as He went forth ministering unto the people. He saw great crowds that gathered to hear Him. He saw Jesus heal the sick.

Following this, Nephi saw Jesus taken by some people and "judged," then "lifted up upon the cross and slain for the sins of the world." (*1 Nephi* 11:33.)

Nephi also saw the Saviour as He visited his people, the Nephites, in their land of promise. He saw those who believed the words of the Saviour and obeyed them. He saw also those who did not obey and what happened to them. And many other things did he see. [*End of Scene IV.*]

When Nephi returned to the tent of his father, he was grieved by the actions and attitudes of his brothers. He tried to tell them that what their father had said was true, and that they should pay attention to his counsel; but they would not. To do these things was too hard, they said. Then Nephi, their brother, who was also a prophet, pled with them earnestly to keep the commandments of the Lord.

After listening carefully, "they did humble themselves before the Lord." And Nephi tells us, "I had joy and great hopes of them, that they would walk in paths of righteousness." (*1 Nephi* 16:5.) This means that he hoped that they would listen to the commandments of God and obey them. [*End of Scene V.*]

Sometimes we hear our present-day Prophet speak on the radio. Sometimes we see and hear him on television. Sometimes we read in newspapers and books what he advises us to do. Whatever he says is God's message and advice to us. It is

through him that God speaks to all the world. [*End of epilogue.*]

### How To Present the Flannelboard Story:

#### Characters and Props Needed for This Presentation Are:

A picture of President David O. McKay. To be used for the prologue and epilogue of the story. (See *The Instructor*, October, 1963, Centerspread.)

Lehi standing. (BM82.) To be used in Scenes I and II.

Jews in Jerusalem. (BM83.) To be used in Scene I.

Lehi's family and friends. (BM84.) To be used in Scene II.

Nephi seated. (BM85.) To be used in Scenes II, III, IV, and V.

Mountain top. (Make simple drawing and color.)

Montage of Nephi's vision: Mary with baby Jesus; baptism of Jesus; Jesus, as a grown man ministering to the people; Jesus on the cross; Jesus among the Nephites. (BM86.) To be used in Scene IV.

Nephi's brothers, Laman, Lemuel, and Sam. (BM87.) To be used in Scene V.

#### Order of Episodes:

##### SCENE I:

Scenery: A street scene in Jerusalem.

Action: Lehi is seen preaching to angry Jews in Jerusalem.

##### SCENE II:

Scenery: An outdoor scene.

Action: Lehi and his family are in the wilderness. Lehi is preaching to them, telling them of things that will happen between that time and the birth of Christ.

##### SCENE III:

Scenery: Outdoor scene.

Action: Nephi is seated, thinking about the things his father Lehi has told them. He wishes to see the same things his father saw.

##### SCENE IV:

Scenery: Outdoor scene.

Action: Nephi is seen seated on a high mountain peak. Before him passes a vision of what will happen in the future. He sees Mary holding the baby Jesus; Jesus as a man, ministering to His followers; John the Baptist baptizing Jesus; Jesus hanging on the cross; Jesus as He visits on the American continent.

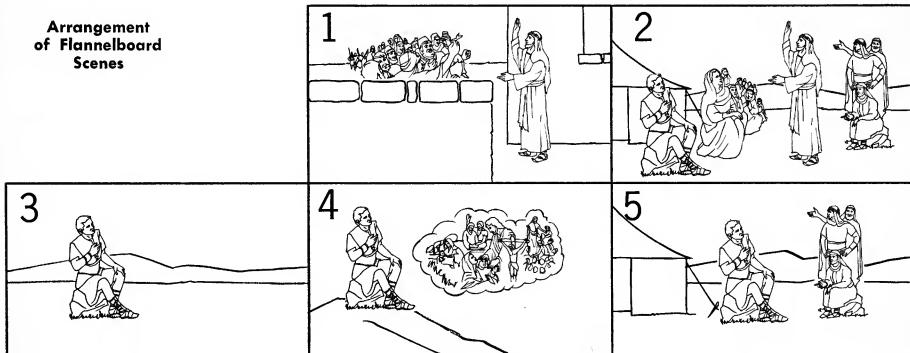
##### SCENE V:

Scenery: Outdoor scene.

Action: Nephi is seen talking with his brothers. He is telling them that what they have heard from their father is true. He advises them to be obedient.

Library File Reference: PROPHETS AND PROPHECY.

Arrangement  
of Flannelboard  
Scenes



# Babe of Bethlehem

LUACINE CLARK FOX

ROBERT M. CUNDICK

Like a lullaby  $\text{♩} = 132$

1. The lit - tle Babe of Beth - le - hem was  
(2.) bless - ed Babe of Beth - le - hem who

born long years a - go —, And lay with-in a man - get bare be -  
came to earth to dwell —, To of - fer men e - ter - nal life, Thy

neath the star's bright glow —, And an - gels filled the star - ry sky and  
gos - pel true to tell —, I pray that I may try to be a

sang sweet praise to God on high, They her - ald-ed the Sav - ior's birth in  
per - fect child like un - to Thee, That I may seek to do Thy will, and

Beth - le - hem be - low —, 2. O well. —  
seek to do it

Superintendents



## A NEW AND IMPORTANT ASSIGNMENT

The new alternative stake board plan, called the "Small Stake Board," has as its objective the improvement of teaching in the wards.

The plan calls for a similar superintendency supervisory structure in the stake and ward. The divisions of responsibility are substantially identical as set forth in a recent article by Superintendent David Lawrence McKay.<sup>1</sup>

The superintendent becomes the classroom supervisor of Courses 1 through 9. He is directly assisted by the Junior Sunday School coordinator in Courses 1 through 5. The stake superintendent meets monthly with all ward superintendents at a preparation or leadership meeting for training in this important work. The stake superintendent is responsible for the training of the ward superintendents.

The stake Junior Sunday School coordinator meets with and trains ward Junior Sunday School co-ordinators.

The stake superintendent is also expected to visit the wards. He may attend any of the courses from 1 through 9 and, after the meeting, consult with teachers concerning teacher improvement.

He may attend ward faculty meeting. This meeting now becomes much more significant in that it may divide into sections where each member of the superintendency will instruct teachers in his area. Here the stake superintendent may visit with the ward superintendent and the teachers

in Courses 1 through 9 for discussion of teacher improvement.

In a similar manner, one assistant superintendent has responsibility for Courses 10 through 19; the other assistant for Courses 20 through 29. This is a new and important delegation of responsibility to the assistant superintendents. They should be chosen by the bishop upon recommendation of the superintendent, having in mind their abilities to supervise teaching.

Under a small stake board plan there may be a minimum of six members and a maximum of nine. The six members are superintendent, first and second assistants, secretary, teacher trainer, and Junior Sunday School coordinator. This small board would be useable only in stakes with scattered wards and branches. The nine-member board would include a musician, a librarian, and an Instructor Use Director.

In supervising teaching in the wards, the teacher trainer becomes a very important and necessary person. Under direction of the assistant responsible for Courses 20 through 29, the teacher trainer conducts the prospective teacher training class. Also, he may be asked by the superintendent to give general supervision to the teaching program in faculty meeting. He may be assigned in faculty meeting to attend any of the three sections dealing with specific instruction for certain classes. The superintendency will rely heavily on the teacher trainer to assist them in supervision of the

actual Sunday School class teaching, especially in Courses 10 to 29.

Visiting classrooms and witnessing student-teacher relationships is an important part of teacher supervision now assigned to the superintendency. Under the alternative small, stake-board plan superintendencies will now have the direct and full responsibility for seeing that Sunday School teaching is effective.

This alternative plan, if elected for use in your stake, would eliminate the use of a Plan 2-type board. Wards would no longer be called upon to supply teachers as associate board members serving in a dual capacity. With the elimination of the Plan 2 board, the alternatives are for the stake to organize either a full or large stake board, or a small stake board.

The Sunday School has been charged with the responsibility of helping parents teach children the Gospel. We can no longer be content with mediocre performance. Officers and teachers at all levels have the capacity to reach the children who heretofore have become disinterested, and with kindly encouragement they can do so. Unless this new assignment to superintendents and their assistants on the stake and ward level will accomplish an improvement in Gospel teaching, it has no purpose. The general board is committed to help both stake and ward officers to equip themselves better in the handling of this new and important assignment.

—*Superintendent  
Lynn S. Richards.*

Library File Reference: SUNDAY SCHOOL—  
LOCAL LEADERSHIP.

<sup>1</sup>The Instructor, November, 1966, page 436.

## Memorized Recitations

For February 5, 1967

Scriptures listed below should be recited in unison by students of Courses 9 and 15 during the worship service of Feb. 5, 1967. These scriptures should be memorized by students of the respective classes during the months of December and January.

### COURSE 9:

(This scripture emphasizes the necessity for every human being to be baptized by water and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost before he can enter the kingdom of God.)

"Jesus answered, Verily, verily,

I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

—John 3:5.

### COURSE 15:

(This scripture tells that God our Father will always inform His prophets before He takes any action concerning His children on earth.)

"Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets."

—Amos 3:7.

## COMING EVENTS

Dec. 25, 1966

Christmas Worship Service

• • •

Jan. 1, 1967

Pupil Advancement

Begin New Courses

## Answers to Your Questions

### The Full or Large Stake Board

*Q. Is the full stake board abandoned?* —October Conference.

A. No. The full or large stake-board plan contemplates the holding of regular preparation meetings, with stake board members giving assistance to ward teachers by departments and by class and personal visits. The small stake board contemplates help to teachers through the ward Sunday School executive officers.

### New Duties for Superintendencies

*Q. Under the full or large stake board, are the members of the su-*

*perintendency assigned new duties?* —October Conference.

A. Yes. All stake and ward superintendencies come under the new division of responsibilities. See the article by Superintendent David Lawrence McKay in *The Instructor*, November, 1966, pg. 436.

### Two Plans for Stake Boards

*Q. Is Plan 2 (the associate-board-member stake board) eliminated?* —October Sunday School Conference.

A. Yes. It is recommended that all boards be under one of two plans, the small stake board or the large stake board. The small stake board, however, may vary from

six to nine members; this is an optional plan, and stakes desiring to try it on an experimental basis should indicate this to the general board in writing.

### Help From the General Board

*Q. Will superintendents get help from the general board in learning how to supervise?* —October Sunday School Conference.

A. Yes. The general board is preparing materials for stake and ward superintendencies on the training of superintendences for supervisory responsibilities. It is recommended that teacher trainers assist superintendences in this function.

## The Deseret Sunday School Union

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General Superintendent: GEORGE R. HILL

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James R. Tolman



*Little children love to learn—they love to examine, explore, and discover. Guide them in learning of the wonders of the world each week when . . .*

## Their Hands Steal Into Yours

by Addie J. Gilmore

Challenging to teachers of young children is a rare combination of three characteristics or attributes essential to learning: interest, motivation, and attention span. These are normally found in varying degrees in all young children.

Interest and motivation are established. These seem to be built in—ready for action. Attention span, however, lags far behind. It is shockingly short. The challenge to build and increase it is constant.

*How can teachers plan around this? How can they make Sunday School an experience of peace, happiness, worship, and learning?*

Teachers find many answers by projecting themselves into the world of children. They see the child's world through his eyes and know what his interests and activities are. To gain this knowledge, let us look at the children in action.

### THE WORLD OF CHILDREN

Marvelous and remarkable is the world of young children. To them it is wonder-filled. It is a place and a time for examining, exploring, and discovering. Surprises, thrills, and exciting, first-time experiences happen in rapid succession.

Interest is keen. Motivation is constant. Feelings are strong of wanting to know, to see, to do, to own, or to take part in all that goes on around them. This is the perceptive stage of learning.

By nature, children are individuals of action. They run, jump, roll, push, and climb. The inherent drive for motion is almost constant. The following poem by Florence Fraser\* describes some of their need for action.

*The hands of children are always moving,  
Grasping, feeling, pulling, shoving,  
They touch, they rub, they poke, they squeeze,  
And thus their curiosity they appease.*

*Their little hands are so expressive,  
They are gay, brave, afraid, and pensive,  
And when they jerk, or twitch, or plead,  
We try to learn, then answer each need.*

*They pat you lightly to gain attention,  
Or reach up to hug and show affection.  
They strike and pound, whereby is shown  
Communication for worlds unknown.*

*Their little hands steal into yours  
And stay, in trust, because they are sure  
That bigger hands will guide the way  
Till theirs mature, some wonderful day.*

These are children in the formative period of life. Knowledge and understanding of them is critically important in determining how to plan lessons and the kinds of guidance that will be most effective.

### PREPARATION TO TEACH

Prayer for guidance and inspiration should be the first step in preparation. The Saviour said:

*Teach ye diligently and my grace shall attend you, that you may be instructed more perfectly in theory, in principle, in doctrine, in the law of the gospel, in all things that pertain unto the kingdom of God, that are expedient for you to understand.* (Doctrine and Covenants 88:78.)

Make and use a lesson plan. Let the promises of this scripture guide you. Consider the needs of the children and concepts of the lesson.

### ATTENTION SPAN

Normally, the attention span is very short in young children. From studies made at Iowa State University,<sup>1</sup> we learn that ability to concentrate or

<sup>1</sup>Glen R. Hawkes, Damaris Pease, *Behavior and Development from 5 to 12*; Harper and Brothers Publishers, New York, N.Y.

\*Source unobtainable.

## TEACHER IMPROVEMENT LESSON FOR FEBRUARY 1967

sustain attention comes from within—not from environment. The attention span increases with age and experience. Children adjust gradually to longer periods of watching and listening. President Hugh B. Brown once said, "The Lord always takes people as they are, then leads them gradually to what he would have them be." Learning will be quickened by the patience, understanding, interest, and receptive attitudes of adults. To hold and increase the attention span of class members, the following suggestions might be helpful.

### 1. Take Care of All Needs

- (a) Create a warm, receptive classroom climate. Be relaxed!
- (b) Provide comfortable seating, space, and adequate facilities.
- (c) Avoid crowding. Keep groups small—10 to 12 children.
- (d) Be sure all can see and hear what is going on.
- (e) Balance the time for listening, sitting quietly, and doing.
- (f) Be alert to restlessness, fatigue, or possible illness.
- (g) Listen to children's comments; answer their questions, and encourage conversation.
- (h) Provide short activities as needed (a poem, a song, or standing rest exercise). Then continue with the lesson.
- (i) Dramatize finger plays—children gently hopping like rabbits, flying like birds, etc., in place of using fingers.
- (j) Participate when possible in the worship service: 2½-minute talks and sacrament gems.
- (k) For variety, when children are noisy, try the "Quiet Game" used by Clare S. Mathews, Director of Memorial Nursery School, New York, N. Y.<sup>2</sup> When children become noisy, she has them relax and each think of how quiet things can be. In a circle they take turns speaking softly:

*As quiet as snow falling,  
As quiet as snow melting,  
As quiet as gold fish swimming,  
As quiet as a bunny hopping,  
As quiet as a kitten walking.*

<sup>2</sup>The Journal of Nursery Education, April, 1963, published by National Association for Nursery Education.

Adapt this at times to:

*As quiet as the worship service,  
As quiet as when someone is praying,  
As quiet as at sacrament time.*

### 2. Use Variety in Lesson Presentations

- (a) Story telling, conversation
- (b) Flannelboard
- (c) Chalkboard
- (d) Sand table
- (e) Groove board with figures
- (f) Lighted picture box, etc.

### 3. Visual Aids

Select them carefully. They enhance and support the development of lesson objectives. The *right one at the right time* can be a powerful teaching aid.

- (a) *Pictures*—from the Course picture packet, ward library, and personal collections. When small ones are used, mount them on construction paper.
- (b) *Objects*—rocks, sand, seashells, fruits, nuts, flowers, foods. Use when studying the "Beautiful World," "Foods That Are Good for Us," etc. Use "surprise" packages.

(c) *People*—a mother and baby—for lessons on family, babies, etc.; the bishop or other Church leaders.

(d) *Small live animals*—preferably brought in by the teacher—a goldfish, small turtle, bird in a cage, kitten, puppy, etc. Use when teaching about nature, kindness, and care of pets.

(e) *Family figures*—rubber, wood, or plastic.

(f) *Community figures*.

These are a few; find other unusual ones with interest appeal. Do not clutter! Use only a few aids with each lesson. Use only the *right ones*.

Use poetry with appropriate pictures for the joy of the rhythm. Use songs and dramatize the verses.<sup>3</sup> See sections I and III of Course manuals for enrichment materials. Use *The Instructor*, an excellent source!

Childhood is the formative period of life, a time for doing and learning. Watch for the teaching moments! Strike while the iron is hot!

<sup>3</sup>The Children Sing; Moiselle Renstrom, *Sermons and Songs For Little Children*. Library File Reference: TEACHERS AND TEACHING—CHILD STUDENTS.

# OUR WORSHIPFUL HYMN PRACTICE

Senior Sunday School Hymn for the Month of February, 1967



**HYMN:** "Oh My Father"; author, Eliza R. Snow; composer, Lowell Mason; *Hymns—Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*. No. 138.

This is the great hymn and prayer written by that poetic genius, Eliza Roxey Snow (1804-1887). She was secretary of the first Relief Society, organized by the Prophet Joseph Smith in Nauvoo. This month we are singing the hymn with the music which we used until the beginning of the present century. This melody by Lowell Mason is a great and fervent one and lends itself to hearty singing. Many of our discerning musicians feel that if we were to adopt this music, as we did in the early days of the Church, we would sing "O My Father" much oftener than we do now. It is quite rarely that we sing all four stanzas with the Mc-Granahan tune (No. 139), because of the length of time involved. The Mason tune goes at a faster pace so that the four stanzas may be sung in quite the usual time of a hymn. We highly recommend this Mason tune.

#### To the Chorister:

1. *Note the metronome indication.* It recommends a beat about every second. So make haste slowly, and let your directing beat be spirited but not too fast. Check your time with the second hand of a watch.

2. *How loud shall we ask people to sing this hymn?* It is a prayer, and all true hymns are prayers addressed to Deity. But prayers need not be whispered. Urge everyone to sing *double forte*. It will do us good to fill our lungs with what it takes to "shout praises to our God." This is not a private prayer, but one sung fervently by a host of faithful souls.

3. *This hymn begins with an upbeat.* Have you practiced recently how to give a good preparatory beat? Did you try it in preparation meeting. Remember, our people need the lungs well filled with breath to be able to sing the two beginning notes. Give them a reasonable and clear opportunity to sing them.

4. *Shall we sing all of the first line in one breath?* It would be very uncomfortable to do that, and not worth the effort. The music phrase breaks naturally in the middle, and a breath is natural there in all four stanzas. We recommend breaths where they occur naturally: in the middle and at the end of each of the four lines.

5. *Notice the third line.* It begins with a downbeat instead of the upbeat. Therefore, be especially clear with your beat at this place. You might, with good taste, hurry slightly over the rest at the end of the second line. Do whatever is necessary to make your people comfortable, and encour-

age them to sing with heart and soul.

#### To the Organist

1. *Do you play pedals?* Then you will wish to play them mostly an octave lower than written. This part will be easy.

2. *Remember to breathe where the singers breathe.*

3. *Let rhythm roll forth from your fingers in majestic style.* You will notice that usually people sing in a sort of meandering time. But you need not be wavering rhythmically at the organ. Pay close attention to a steady beat: people will enjoy it and praise you for the wonderful authority you show at the organ. Everybody loves rhythm, but few there be that find it. Study to produce it.

4. Make your sound fairly loud, at least to equal the sound of all the singers combined.

5. *Important:* hold the half note at the end of the first line only the length of a quarter note. Then the quarter note can be taken as a rest for breathing. But hold the half note at the end of the second line a full half note, and follow it by the quarter-note rest. This will keep the singers from starting the third line too early.

6. *Give full attention to the great, slow, rhythmic lift in this hymn.* It will lend strength and majesty to your organ part.

—Alexander Schreiner.

## Junior Sunday School Hymn for the Month of February, 1967

HYMN: "We Give Thee But Thine Own"; author, W. Walsham How; music from *Cantica Laudis*; *The Children Sing*, No. 61.

The Gospel concept to be developed in this hymn is: *The world and all that is in it belongs to our Heavenly Father. We thank Him for sharing it.* We are given talents by our Heavenly Father. When they are developed, great joy and happiness comes to those who share them. Organists share their talents with others by playing in Church.

### To the Chorister:

The chorister may introduce this hymn by singing it several times while the children listen. Then the meaning of the words "thine," "e'er," and "a trust" may be explained.

When presenting the hymn to children, use the whole-song method. Sing it by memory and unaccompanied. It is effective to sing it in a childlike voice, using your eyes and facial expression as visual aids.

When teaching the hymn to children, use the interval beat pattern as it serves as a guide, especially for the difficult parts. Change to the conventional beat pattern when the hymn is learned.

Observe that all the phrases begin on the last count of the measure.

Helpful suggestions on "Meaningful Conducting" may be found in *A Guide for Choristers and Organists in Junior Sunday School* on page 36.

### To the Organist

The music should be played *simply*. Keep in mind that the beginning chord of each phrase is on the fourth count of the measure. Give a slight attack on the beginning chord of each phrase and play the other chords in a *legato* manner.

The top note of each chord in the right hand makes up the melody line of the hymn. It is important that this be heard above other notes of the chord and that all notes within each chord be played simultaneously.

To introduce the hymn to children, play the melody notes in the right hand and the notes, as written, for the left hand. If children are unfamiliar with the music, the hymn may be used as a prelude preceding the teaching of the hymn.

"On Wings of Song" by Felix Mendelssohn is the instrumental

number for February. It is found in the supplementary book, *Chapel Echoes*, compiled and arranged by Rob Roy Peery. The melody is familiar to many organists. It is very well arranged for use as a prelude or postlude. The single-note melody found on the first page is played by the left hand. It is then transferred to the right hand with a simple chordal accompaniment played also by the right hand.

On page two, skill in bringing out top melody notes of chords that appear in both the treble and bass clefs is necessary so that *all* melody notes may be heard. Finally, the observance of tempo, phrasing, and expression marks will add much to the beauty of the piece.

—Florence S. Allen.

### REPRINTS OF SONGS

from  
*The Instructor*  
for

Junior Sunday Schools are now available. Eight books in an envelope for 95 cents. May be ordered from Church Distribution Center, 33 Richards Street, Salt Lake City; or from the Deseret Sunday School Union, 79 South State Street, Salt Lake City, Utah 84111.

### February Sacrament Gems

#### SENIOR SUNDAY SCHOOL

"... Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me."

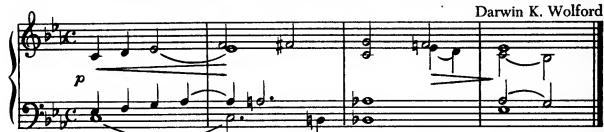
*1 Corinthians 11:24.*

#### JUNIOR SUNDAY SCHOOL

Jesus said: "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you."

*John 15:12.*

### Organ Music To Accompany February Sacrament Gems



(A picture lesson for Course 3 children to show that when they are obedient, kind, prayerful, and regular attenders at Sunday School, they are following the counsel of Jesus and the prophets.)

# LITTLE ONES LIKE ME



*I love my Heavenly Father,  
He hears me when I pray  
And ask for special blessings  
To help me every day.*

*I will try to serve Him  
And all His laws obey,  
Then He will give me what is best  
When I kneel down and pray.*

*I want to learn of Jesus Christ—  
He is our Saviour dear.  
When I go to Sunday School  
He seems very near.*

*I hear the stories of His love  
For little ones like me.  
I will show how good and kind  
A little child can be.*



*I was sent to live on earth  
With parents kind and good.  
I'll honor and obey them  
And do the things I should.*

*Mother takes good care of us,  
Father works all day.  
I will help them all I can,  
I'll put my toys away.*

*We push and pull while Johnny rides  
His foot is sore, you see.  
And when we take him for a ride  
It's fun for all us three.*

*Do you have a little friend  
Who needs some help from you?  
When you help another child  
You are happy, too.*

—Jane Bradford Terry.

(For Course 1, lessons of January 1 and February 12, "I Am in Family"; for "We Will Together in Our Home"; for Course 1a, lesson of January 15, "Heavenly Man Will Work Us"; for Course 2, lesson of December 18, "We Show Our Love When We Are Kind"; for Course 3, lessons of February 12 and 19, "Patriarchs Led God's Kingdom" and "Prophets Continued the Work"; to support family home evening lessons 43, 45, and 46.)  
Library File Reference: CHILDREN.





*Testimony of the Eight Witnesses regarding the plates of the Book of Mormon: "We have seen and hefted them."*

from an interview with a Mr. Saunders of Palmyra, who said he knew all the Smiths:

Q. "What kind of a man was Martin Harris?"  
A. "He was one of the finest men in the town."

Many other references to anti-Mormon statements could be given but all agree that Martin Harris was an honest man.

Kelley had an interview with Dr. John Stafford of Rochester who, when a young man, lived one mile from the Smiths. Kelley asked:

Q. "Did you know Oliver Cowdery?"

A. "Yes; he taught school on the Canandaigua Road, where the stone school house now stands, just three and a half miles from Palmyra. Cowdery was a man of good character."

In 1877, David Whitmer said:

"Many witnesses yet live in Richmond, who will testify . . . to the good character of Oliver Cowdery."<sup>10</sup>

Howe said that Oliver was a blacksmith—which shows how careless he was with the truth; everyone knew that Oliver was a school teacher. But Howe did say that Oliver "sustained a fair reputation."

David Whitmer fell away from the Church because he could not run it his way. He lived to his 84th year and was known as a respectable citizen. Some tried to get him to deny his testimony of the Book of Mormon, and one or two twisted his words and then published a statement that he had. This upset David so much that thereafter he would not grant an interview unless he had a witness present. In 1881 he had a proclamation published in which he reaffirmed his testimony.<sup>11</sup> The *Richmond [Mo.] Conservator* of March 24, 1881, added an endorse-

ment of 22 leading citizens, all attesting that they knew David Whitmer "to be a man of highest integrity and of undoubted truth and veracity."

There can be no question about the honesty of the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon.

As to the eight witnesses, and without going into detail, the record shows that these men, three from the Smith family, four from the Whitmer family, and one, Hyrum Page, an in-law to Peter Whitmer, Sr., were all men of honesty and integrity.

## 2. Ability

The second point in the test of credibility is *ability*. This includes the power of observation, good memory as to the facts to which his testimony relates; it also includes the opportunity to observe what he testifies about.

The record speaks for itself. The Three Witnesses said they were shown the plates—had seen them "by the power of God."

The Eight Witnesses said they were shown them by Joseph Smith and felt and "hefted" them. Most observers, living at the same time, said that these men were quite normal.<sup>12</sup> It is only when the supernatural comes in that they are labeled as dupes, etc. But the record shows that these men were neither ignorant nor subnormal.<sup>13</sup>

Perhaps for a moment we should look at the general claim of hallucinations. This becomes absurd in the case of the Eight Witnesses—this was a man-to-man transaction. The history of the lives of the Three Witnesses, from 1829, when their testimony was given, until their deaths, shows no lack of mental stability.

In 1848 Oliver Cowdery<sup>14</sup> said:

*I beheld with my eyes and handled with my hands the gold plates from which it [The Book of Mormon] was transcribed. —That book is true.*

In David Whitmer's "Address" he said:

*I was present at the deathbed of Oliver Cowdery, and his last words were "Brother David, be true to your testimony to the Book of Mormon."*

Martin Harris always stood by his testimony.

## 3. Number and Consistency

This can be answered without discussion. There were three witnesses to one testimony and eight to the other. These were never changed and remained exactly the same. They have stood for over a hundred years—they need no proof of consistency.

*(Concluded on page 492.)*

<sup>10</sup>See "Kelley-Braden Debate," H. Roberts, *Comprehensive History of the Church*, Volume I; Deseret News, Salt Lake City, Utah; pages 150-153.

<sup>11</sup>H. Roberts, *Mid-Atlantic or Deseret News*, 1869; Volume II, page 243 (from a statement by Oliver Cowdery, Deseret News of April 13, 1859). Also see the statement by Cowdery when he came back into the Church as recorded in the same book, pages 250-251.

<sup>12</sup>David Whitmer, "An Address to All Believers in Christ," given at Richmond, Missouri, 1887; New York Public Library ZZMG p. v. 18. (Also see Roberts' *New Witness for God and Comprehensive History of the Church*.)

<sup>13</sup>New York Public Library, ZZMG p. v. 18.

#### 4. Conformity of Testimony and Experience

The fourth test is readily answered as to the Eight Witnesses. Even some anti-Mormon writers say that Joseph actually had some plates and showed them to these eight witnesses. As to the testimony of the Three Witnesses, it is admitted that their declaration did not conform to everyday experience. But neither did the experiences of Paul, or Stephen, or Peter, or Moses, or Joseph—such experiences do not come at the will and call of man. Their infrequency may dispel the theory of hallucination, but they are possible. The fact is that the testimony of the Three Witnesses stands unchanged.<sup>15</sup>

#### 5. Coincidence

What has been said about "conformity with experience" is appropriate as an answer to the fifth test of "coincidence of their testimony with collateral circumstances." The Book of Mormon itself said there would be three witnesses and "others."

It is one thing to make the statement and another to get three such different persons to be the witnesses. They had come by invitation to the Whitmer family residence. In the morning they had the usual devotional exercises—scripture reading and prayer—as was their custom. They were men of faith. From this circumstance it was more than a coincidence that they accepted Joseph's invitation that they retire to a wooded spot and seek the witness promised.

The plates, according to Church history, were shown to the Eight Witnesses by Joseph a few days after the viewing by the Three Witnesses; this was at the Smith home near Palmyra.

In conclusion, let us remember the truth expressed by B. H. Roberts, that no one can stand up and say he knows that what the witnesses said is not true, that what they said they saw, they did not see.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup>See B. H. Roberts, *New Witnesses for God*, Volume 2, page 247. Library File Reference: BOOK OF MORMON—WITNESSES.

<sup>16</sup>B. H. Roberts, *New Witnesses for God*, Volume II, pages 244, 245.

## Magic Modeling Clay

(For Activity Period in Junior Sunday School)



### MAGIC MODELING CLAY

1 cup cornstarch  
1/2 cup cold water  
2 cups table salt  
2/3 cup water  
Pure food colors or tempera paint

Mix salt and  $\frac{2}{3}$  cup water in saucepan. Place over low heat, stirring constantly three or four minutes until mixture is heated. Remove pan from heat. Immediately mix cornstarch and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup cold water and add all at once to hot saltwater mixture. Stir quickly. The mixture should thicken to about the consistency of stiff dough. If mixture does not thicken, place pan over low heat again and stir about one minute, or until mixture starts to thicken. Turn out on work surface and knead as you would dough. Use clay immediately or store in a tightly closed container. Recipe may be doubled if directions above are followed with one exception. Keep saucepan over heat when the cornstarch and water are added to the hot salt and water mixture. Food coloring or tempera paint may be added to the saltwater mixture.

Modeled objects will dry and harden at room temperature in about 36 hours, depending on size of object. Large objects should be dried on a wire rack to allow circulation of air, and they may be pierced with a pencil or other sharp object to hasten drying. Drying may be speeded also by preheating kitchen oven to  $350^{\circ}$  F., then turning off heat and placing objects in oven on wire rack or screen until oven is cold.

—Courtesy of *Precis Magazine*.

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(CR) Centennial Reprint (center insert)

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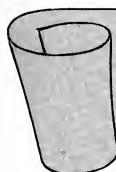
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# Christmas and the

## *Christmas Customs*

### 1. ORIGIN OF THE NAME

The term "Christmas," according to the Catholic Encyclopedia, originated from Christes Maesse (the Mass of Christ), first so called in the year 1038.<sup>1</sup> Previous to being called Christmas the commemoration was known as the Feast of the Nativity.

### 2. FIXING THE DATE OF DECEMBER 25

The Feast of the Nativity was formerly held on January 6, which was also the traditional date of Jesus' baptism, and was known as "Epiphany." Apparently the nativity aspect was first changed to December 25 in the 4th Century A.D. in Rome. Acceptance came slowly for some, and Alexandria, Egypt, did not accept December 25 as the commemoration date until the beginning of the 5th Century and Jerusalem possibly did not accept it until the 6th Century.

Nearly every country and religious cult of Europe and the Near East had a midwinter festival period centered on a yearning for spring, a return to more sunshine, and a spark of new life. With the extension of so-called Christianity, these feasts were adapted to commemorate the birth of Jesus Christ. December 25, on which date occurred a Roman festival of the Sun, was selected; and Jesus became the object of the celebration, as being the Son of Righteousness and the Giver of Life.

The purely pagan nature of this date is observable in the fact that December 25 was more readily accepted by the western part (gentile) of the Church, while Jerusalem held off for two more centuries.

### 3. THE CHRISTMAS STAR

The Star of Bethlehem or Star of the East (*Matthew 2:2*).

### 4. THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

The twelve days between December 25 and January 6 came to be regarded as Twelve Holy Days and Holy Nights.

### 5. THE WISE MEN

Legend has it that there were three wise men (probably because the scripture mentions three gifts—*Matthew 2:1-12*). However, no specific number is mentioned in the scriptures. These were men from the East, probably Persia or Arabia, and have been called "Magi" in reference to their supposedly supernatural knowledge and power. Our word "magic" originates from such ancient eastern peoples. Tradition has it that they found the Christ-child on the Twelfth Night, that is, on January 6.

### 6. THE CHRISTMAS TREE

The fir tree represents life—especially in the winter, when other trees are barren but the fir is evergreen. Pagan winter festivals used the evergreen tree before the celebrations were converted into Christmas. The present-day Christmas tree is a carry-over from the pagan rite.

### 7. USE OF THE TERM "XMAS"

"X" is the Greek equivalent of "Ch," and is used to present a shorter form of the word "Christmas."<sup>3</sup>

*The true significance of Christmas is found not in symbols or feasts but in the testimonies*

<sup>1</sup>Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. 2, pages 724-728 (1913 edition).

<sup>2</sup>Kiropp Lake, "The Christmas Festival," Address delivered at the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, on December 15, 1935. Privately published (500 copies), the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York (copyright 1937). See also Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. 5, page 705 (1965 edition).

<sup>3</sup>World Book Encyclopedia, Vol. 3, pages 408-416 (1966 edition). See also Alfred Carl Hottes, 1,001 Christmas Facts and Fancies; De la Mare Company, Inc., New York, N.Y., 1930.

# Birth of Christ

## *The True Significance of Christmas*

### **1. THE DATE OF CHRIST'S BIRTH**

"It is claimed by many Biblical scholars that December 25th, the day celebrated in Christendom as Christmas, cannot be the correct date. We believe April 6th to be the birthday of Jesus Christ as indicated in a revelation of the present dispensation [Doctrine and Covenants 20:1]. . . . This acceptance is admittedly based on faith in modern revelation, and in no wise is set forth as the result of chronological research or analysis."<sup>1</sup> The important thing is that Jesus Christ was born of Mary and is the literal Son of God the Eternal Father. The exact date is of less consequence than the fact.

### **2. NATIVITY STORY FROM THE BIBLE**

*And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David): To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.*

(Luke 2:4-11.)

### **3. TESTIMONY OF THE BOOK OF MORMON**

The angel to Nephi (about 600 B.C.):

... in the city of Nazareth I beheld a virgin, and she was exceedingly fair and white . . . and [the angel] said unto me: Behold, the virgin whom thou seest is the mother of the son of God, after the manner of the flesh. . . . And I looked and beheld the virgin again, bearing a child in her arms. And the angel said unto me: Behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the Son of the Eternal Father! (I Nephi 11:13-21; see also Mosiah 3:5-8, about 124 B.C.; and Alma 7:7-13, about 83 B.C.)

Prophecy of Samuel the Lamanite (about 6 B.C.):

... at the time of his coming . . . there shall be great lights in heaven, insomuch that in the night before he cometh there shall be no darkness, insomuch that it shall appear unto man as if it was day. Therefore, there shall be one day and a night and a day, as if it were one day and there were no night; and this shall be unto you for a sign; for ye shall know of the rising of the sun and also of its setting . . . nevertheless the night shall not be darkened; and it shall be the night before he is born. And behold, there shall be a new star arise, such an one as ye never have beheld; and this also shall be a sign unto you. (Helaman 14:3-5; see also 3 Nephi 1:13-21.)

### **4. THE WONDER OF THE ATONEMENT**

"The hopes and fears of all the years" are centered in the divine nature of the Son of God. As the Only Begotten of the Father in the flesh, He alone could make an atonement for the sins of others. Little wonder that angels sang, a new star arose, light was manifest, prophets exclaimed, and wise men took notice. Thus, all things are reckoned as being before (B.C.) or after His birth (A.D.).



of His Sonship and mission as given by prophets and apostles through the ages.

<sup>1</sup>James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, page 104.

<sup>2</sup>A.D. does not mean "after death," as some have supposed, but stands for "anno domini," meaning "in the year of our Lord."

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## WINDOW OF HOPE

FRIEND ON A RECLINING CHAIR: HE CHANGED THE CONVERSATION.

It was a bleak winter night. The day had been a cold one, and made much cooler because of a stunning disappointment which had struck a community venture.

Early in the evening I called at the apartment home of an old friend,<sup>1</sup> an associate in the civic project, to discuss the undertaking with him.

He was in his pajamas, propped up in a large black leather reclining chair. He was meticulously groomed, as he always had been since I first met him in college years ago. His dark brown hair was smartly combed. His cheeks were youthfully rosy. His green eyes sparkled. But when he smiled there was a noticeable strain in his lower cheek.

He was recovering from a stroke which had laid him low several months earlier.

We talked about the discouraging blow which had hit during the day. As we continued to chat, my

friend lifted his head. Then he changed the subject:

"You know, the memory has just come to me of something that happened nearly twenty years ago. World War II had been over some two years.

"We had recently purchased a manufacturing plant in Kansas. We began making wheels—for barbecue carts, lawnmowers, and other items. There was a particularly heavy demand for lawnmower wheels, since mowers had not been manufactured during the war.

"But steel was still scarce. In fact, there was no allocation of steel for the business we were in. The steel supply from our warehouse soon was exhausted. There was no source to turn to for more steel. You could say the outlook was grim.

"We had just moved into a new home in the suburbs of Wichita. As I looked out beyond our kitchen one day, my eyes stopped on our new washing machine. In the front of the washer was a round hole, about 14 inches in diameter, with a window in it. 'What do they do with the steel from that round cutout?' I asked myself. Then I phoned long distance the head of



the firm which manufactured the washer. He said the steel cutouts were scrap and that he had about two carloads of this steel. The gauge of steel was exactly what we needed for making lawnmower wheels. We made a deal.

"Then I began thinking of other steel products with holes. We located more scrap steel from a manufacturer of creamery cans.

"That was the turning point. Our business grew. In 16 years our annual output climbed from \$35,000 in merchandise to \$6 million."

He added little humorous touches as we talked.

When he finished we were both laughing like school boys. It was a night to remember.

The fortunes of our community project later turned for the better.

Often since, when I have felt disappointment's chilly grip beginning to press, I have thought of that winter night and my smiling, rosy-cheeked friend. I have thought of that hole in the washing machine—a hole that had become a window of hope. And then things have begun to look brighter.

—Wendell J. Ashton.

(For Course 10, lesson of December 18, "Looking Toward the Future"; for Course 5, lesson of January 22, "Faith and Works"; for Course 13, lessons of January 15 and 22, "We Continue the Course"; for "Looking Forward"; for Course 19, lesson of March 5, "Faith and Works"; for Course 27, lesson of February 5, "God and Man"; to support family home evening lesson 44; and of general interest.)

<sup>1</sup>Thomas Bowring Woodbury.